

## Older Women in Our Lives



### Across the Generations

By C.T.

**M**y aunt was named Norma Jean, after Marilyn Monroe. In those days my grandmother had a penchant for films and movie stars and the silver screen was her escape during the depression and the war years.

In early 1945, when my Aunt Norma was born, several occurrences shaped my grandmother's life. The war was nearly over and my grandfather was working 24-hour shifts as a ship's foreman. My family had just moved into the house they would occupy for 54 years. It was dilapidated and ill furnished. Lastly, my grandmother's favorite sister Isabel died at the age of 39. Years later my grandmother would tell me she "almost" suffered a nervous breakdown. Almost probably means she did.

And so my maternal aunt came into the world, a "baby boomer" and the youngest of three children. She was a beautiful baby, albeit unsmiling and

*Across continues on page 6*

### Life Lessons

by Anonymous

**I**t was an older woman who brought me out; my feelings for her pushed the recognition of my sexual attractions to women into a whole-hearted embrace of bisexual identity. Mingled in my second sexual awakening was a deep sensual appreciation for skin just beginning to loosen its grip on bone, the solid curve of a settled waist, the beauty of a woman who had endured all that a difficult life could throw her way. That unrequited crush transformed my life. For the first time, I could see myself in an older woman, and I could imagine that I might live to be her age.

We were both in difficult transitions; while I was struggling into adulthood she was going through menopause, on the cusp (she felt) of old age. But beyond our similarities-we were both acutely alive to

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## Volunteers of the Month

Gail Zacharias  
Robyn Ochs  
Deb Morley  
Wayne Bryant  
Annie Goglia

CT

Kat

Cathleen Finn

&

The wonderful  
women who came  
to the last mailing

And many more  
fabulous people!  
You know who  
you are!

BiWomen is published bi-  
monthly.

### Editor:

Ellyn Ruthstrom

**Printed on  
recycled paper**

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

## Putting the B in Bay Windows

The Boston bi community was all atwitter when the new *Bay Windows* editor, Andrew Rapp, shocked us all with an incredibly bi supportive editorial in its pages just days after he attended the Bisexual Resource Center's House Party. Not only did he ask the gay and lesbian community to consider what it is like to come out as bisexual in a usually hostile GL environment, but he also asked each person to question why they don't identify as bisexual. "Is it because gay or lesbian best identifies you, or because it is safer than describing yourself as bisexual?"

Rapp also admitted to the newspaper's past slights against bis and committed the paper to doing better in the future. "So, as this newspaper challenges itself to meet its responsibilities, I challenge readers to do the same. Try coming out as bisexual to someone you know, or at least ask yourself whether you would be supported if you did so. Better yet, be sure you could be as supportive and comfortable [to] a friend coming out as bisexual as you are with welcoming a gay or lesbian person to our community. And if you aren't able to do this now, get there."

How heartening it was to have an editorial ally speak so strongly for our inclusion into space we've been so long denied. This is big! We've belonged in those pages for a long time, and we are not going to settle for this one-time splash as the be-all and end-all. What I think the bi community would like is just to know that our events, our politics, our opinions, our messages, *our lives* will be respected and taken seriously within the queer community where we expend a great deal of energy, love, and support. We want to feel the warmth of that being reciprocated and acknowledged. And I don't think that is asking too much at all.

Ellyn Ruthstrom

## NEXT IN BiWOMEN

The BiWomen theme for  
April/May is:

### Why Bi?

Why do you consider yourself bisexual? Have you identified as something else at another time in your life? Did you have a moment of revelation about it? Why are you reading BiWomen? Do bi women have a unique perspective? What is it?

*Deadline: March 15, 2003*

## Future Issues in 2003

**June/July**  
*Commitment*

## PLEASE SUBMIT TO BiWOMEN!

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,  
black-and-white art, news, and views to:

BiWomen  
P.O. Box 400639  
Cambridge, MA 02140  
or via e-mail to

NellyThrustmor@aol.com

If you do not want your name  
published, please tell us.

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## BBWN Financial Statement 1/1-02 through 12/31/02

<b>Balance forward 1/1/02:</b>	<b>\$1652.57</b>	<b>Income</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>		Dues	\$1490.00
Printing	2147.39	Merchandise	716.78
Postal fees & postage	945.83	Bank Interest	8.03
Supplies	129.25	Donations	1185.00
Merchandise purchased	106.00	Event income	357.00
Event expenses	327.75	Advertising	0.00
Total expenses	3656.22	Book project income	310.54
		Total income:	4067.35
		Balance as of 12/31/02	\$2063.70

**H**ey, Bi Women: Congratulations! Thanks to the book project (see page 11 for details) and donations, we have a positive net income for 2002. Let's keep up this pattern, and keep BBWN on sound financial footing. We do need your continued support. Please make a donation to BBWN in the coming year.

Remember, BBWN is important! In our 20th year of existence, we are the oldest bi women's group in the world, and *BiWomen* is the second oldest continuous bi publication in the world (after *Bi Nieuws* in the Netherlands). We have no paid staff, and no regular sources of income. We have a longstanding policy of making *BiWomen* available to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay, and the newsletter is given away at conferences and other public venues. For many women, *BiWomen* is their first affirmation of bisexuality.

Checks can be sent to BBWN or, if you wish your donation to be tax-deductible, you may channel it through our parent organization, BRC (both groups: P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge MA 02140)—be sure to put "for BBWN" in the comment line. ▽

Submitted by Robyn Ochs, Treasurer (since 1980)



Our monthly brunches can be counted on for fun conversations and good food, but at the October brunch at Megan and Carla's we also had a rollicking game of Duck, Duck, Goose. Interested in hosting a brunch at your home? Contact Ellyn at 617-623-5535 or nellythrustmor@aol.com

## Pizza and Bodacious Bi Women...Oh, My!



On Tuesday, February 25, BBWN will be hosting a pizza party and brainstorming meeting at the Bisexual Resource Center to envision new ideas for the organization. We'll have food and drink available for schmoozing time from 6-7 p.m. Then we'll talk about what the organization already does, what we want to do in the future, and who would like to be a part of helping the organization thrive. We hope you can come by and offer your insights and energy. The BRC Office is at 29 Stanhope Street (right around the corner from the Hard Rock Cafe) in the Boston Living Center. Closest T stops are Back Bay on the Orange Line and Copley on the Green Line. For those interested, we can retire to Club Cafe for a nightcap after all our planning.



## HIV Wisdom for Older Women

HIV Wisdom for Older Women is an organization dedicated to the prevention of HIV in older women and to life enrichment for those who are infected. Ignored by many in public health who believe older women are no longer sexual, HIV Wisdom seeks to educate and support older women. Visit [hivwisdom.org](http://hivwisdom.org) or contact their office at: HIV Wisdom for Older Women, Family Health Care, 340 Southwest Blvd., Kansas City, KS 66103; 913-722-3100; [jane@hivwisdom.org](mailto:jane@hivwisdom.org).

## Self-Defense Class for Transgendered Women

IMPACT, Inc. will be leading a 5-week self-defense class for transgendered women on Wednesdays, February 26-March 26, 6-10 p.m. The course will be at the IMPACT Training Center, 374 Boylston Street (Route 9) in Brookline. This is the only program in the country designed to address the specific safety concerns of transgendered women. For more information, contact 617-232-7900, [impact@impactboston.com](mailto:impact@impactboston.com), [www.impactboston.com](http://www.impactboston.com).

# A Treasured Grown-up

By Anonymous

Janey was my mother's closest friend. Actually Janey was in love with my mother, but growing up I didn't know that. I just remember going over to her house, playing with her son's pet rat, Schroeder (named for an opera character), and her two cats, Eddie Puss and Rex, and listening to her play cello. Sometimes it was just Mom and me with Janey in her scruffy but welcoming living room with the little Buddha statue high up on a shelf, books everywhere and the inevitable glasses of bourbon. Sometimes it was just Mom, Janey, me, and the whole familiar klatch of laughing women were there.

Janey was a master jeweller, and while the grown-ups were talking, I would wander around her basement full of tools, silver and semi-precious gems. It happens that now I've taken up beading. She loved to laugh and had a knack for making everyone around her laugh. I've cultivated that trait, too.

Janey had translated Rainer Maria Rilke's poems or letters (I forget which) into English, "to pay the bills when the kids were young," she said modestly, but W.W. Norton published them so they must have been good. Somehow, I ended up in Germany translating poetry there when I was 25.

When I came out as a lesbian in 1984, falling in love with an older co-worker, Janey was on my mind. She was my first and only lesbian role model. Although she was never out—she grew up long before that was OK—she did tell me that she had been in love with my mother for several decades. She had a butch look and never wore make-up or jewelry like the other women in the suburban scene of the 50s. Beyond her being in love with my mother and showing no interest in men, her being a lesbian might have been an assumption. I can't say for sure. My mother told me that Janey sometimes talked about wanting to find a man. That was hard for me to believe, but that was before I knew that someone who looked and acted like a lesbian could be bisexual.

Getting a letter from Janey was an event: there were so many original turns of phrase and old-fashioned expressions she had revived from her vast reading and from conversations with all kinds of people. She had great wit and an original mind.

When I was teaching in New York and an out lesbian, I made a pilgrimage to the Cape to see Janey—without my mother. We

talked about old age (by then she was old), loneliness, her grandchildren, her octogenarian knitting group which she had dubbed the Yakkity-Yaks, music, and the Cape. And then I told her she had been a treasured grown-up all during my childhood. Eddy Puss and Rex had died and been replaced by What-a-Goo and Siam, from a song in the musical, "The King of Siam," and I guess we were all purring at that point.

That weekend was the last time I saw her. It gave me a delicious memory of clamming with her on the beach—something I had never done. We were standing there with old, greyish, net bags hanging down between our legs just below the crotch, each with a few clams. They looked like huge testicles that had descended too far. I took a look at her, she looked at me, and we both burst out laughing. ▽

## Life from page 1

language and, even more importantly, music—there were also differences. Her semi-closeted way of speaking elided gender pronouns and all hints of her lesbian identity. Hearing it made me appreciate the freedoms I had growing up queer in a different age. But around her, I picked it up. I was hiding my bisexuality, sure (with some reason) that she, like many lesbians her age, would treat me with contempt if she knew the truth.

The slow accumulation of shame in my body seeped into other parts of my life. It left a stain like the pink flush on her neck, where years of alcohol abuse had begun bleeding through the skin. And for years I thought of her in terms of what she had taught me: the joy of love, the thrill of lust, but above all the sticky, shameful draw of the closet. But as I have found myself facing new transitions, I have realized that no one can teach you what you aren't willing to learn. And I know what lessons I want to take with me. They are the lessons of beauty, and lust, and freedom. Of surviving sadness and letting it go. Of growing older and still making mistakes. Of being unafraid of my own confusion and aware of my own strength.

I am looking forward to being an older woman, a loose-skinned, thick-hipped, sexy older woman. I want to look to the women younger than I am, and see what I can learn and they can teach. ▽

Want to write for BiWomen? Send your submissions to [NellyThrustmor@aol.com](mailto:NellyThrustmor@aol.com).



# An Older and A Younger Woman All-in-One

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

I am an older woman in some parts of my life and I am a younger woman in other parts. I've been the older woman in some love relationships but I am a younger sister. When I go out to a dance club I sometimes feel ancient but when I'm around people who have mortgages and children in college I feel incredibly young and carefree. I thought I would throw out some thoughts that I've been having while mulling over this topic. They didn't all come together as one so I thought I'd keep them separate and let the reader relate them as she may.

Being in my forties I can now look behind me at the women who came before me and look ahead at the women who are coming after me with equal awe. I work in an environment with lots of women in their teens and twenties, and an occasional thirty-something. At 43, I'm the oldest one on staff and it is an unusual situation for me. In my early life I was used to being the youngest in the crowd because I went into first grade when I was five and I was always the last in my group of friends to legally do something (notice the *legally*).

One of the key elements of my work is working intergenerationally. Professional older women mentor college aged interns who in turn mentor the teenaged women in the program. It's a wonderful system of passing along knowledge from one generation to another—and believe me that knowledge stream goes both ways. You can't help but learn lessons from younger women, and they remind you of things you probably learned twenty years ago but forgot.

And one of the things I have relearned from this experience is that older women cannot always pass along knowledge to younger women and expect that it will immediately take root. We learn so much from experiencing our own pains and joys and—despite all good intentions—we need to allow our younger sisters to learn for themselves and just be ready when they turn to us.

To many women our mothers are our closest older woman role model. Even if we choose a different path from our mother's she is there as a link to women who came before us. As someone who lost my mother at a young age I haven't been able to see my mother in that way. She died at the age of 40 so every year I live beyond that it feels like I don't have something to compare it to. To some extent my

relationship with my maternal grandmother took the place of that, though I would never say that she took on the role of mother to me when my own mother died. But she was a woman who shaped me and my perceptions about being a woman in many ways.

I was so glad that I came out to Grammy before she died. I needed to be able to talk to her about my life in a truthful way and it meant so much to me that she welcomed my partner to family gatherings and she would ask me about her. I think I even helped her better understand the depth of relationship that two of her best friends (and classic butch-femme couple) had been in for 30 years. She hadn't wanted to see them as a couple in the same way as a straight relationship, but I pushed her to take it more seriously as the two women dealt with illness and potential separation as they aged.

I don't think intergenerational socializing is encouraged very much outside of individual family circles. And to some extent it makes sense. I know that my interests and the way I spend my time is different from when I was twentysomething. And some of it can be the varied experiences of life. From single clubhopper to coupled suburbanite to mother of two and career woman. One person may go through all those phases in her lifetime but while you are in one of the phases it's probably less likely that you'll meet many people outside that realm, including your age bracket.

That's why I think an organization like BBWN can be such a fun place to have intergenerational contact. I've met women from early twenties to late fifties in this organization and it's been a source of friendships for me that I value tremendously.

One of my favorite people in the world (and one I met through BBWN) is my friend Kate. She's twenty years older than me and I am so blessed to have a friendship with someone with so much wisdom, experience, humor, intellect, and humanity. (And she's very sexy, too.) But knowing Kate, she was



## North American Conference on Bisexuality

San Diego is the site for the 2nd Annual North American Conference on Bisexuality August 21-24, 2003. There will be three days of interactive workshops, discussions, parties and entertainment. Conference tracks will include: Activism & Bi Organizing, Gender, Health, Media & Culture, Relationships & Family, Sexuality, Bi Research and Theory, and Spirituality & Personal Growth. The Radisson Hotel in San Diego is offering a special \$99 per room rate for up to 4 in a room. If you are interested in presenting at the conference contact Alexei\_Guren@msn.com. For other conference information contact Alexei or Luigi Ferrer, lferrer@bisexual.org, 305-669-3031 or visit [www.bisexual.org/events](http://www.bisexual.org/events).

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## NYAC Sixth Annual Youth Summit

The National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC) is a social justice organization that advocates for and with young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning in an effort to end the discrimination they face and ensure their physical and emotional well-being. The Sixth Annual Youth Summit will be held May 30-June 1, 2003 at the Washington Court Hotel in Washington, DC. The Summit will feature more than 100 workshops, panels, and plenary sessions focusing on a range of important topics to queer youth. There will also be a film festival, poetry slam, dancing and much more. Visit [www.nyacyouth.org](http://www.nyacyouth.org) for more information or e-mail [summit@nyacyouth.org](mailto:summit@nyacyouth.org).

## Thanks to Her Love

By Kit

I would like to talk about a very special woman in my life.....My Girlfriend. My girlfriend and I have been together for a little over a year now. We are eleven years apart; she is the older one, but to me it doesn't matter because it seems like we are the same age. We have some of the same likes and dislikes, such as we both love all animals, but love cats the most. She has three and I have two. We also like going out for long drives, staying in to watch TV/movies, chatting on the phone and online and much, much more.

We met online in a bi chatroom about four years ago and finally met in person in January of last year. We went out for coffee and have been together ever since. We are very happy together even though it hasn't been easy being a couple. My oldest daughter had a hard time with it at first; but once she got to know my

girlfriend, she realized that it doesn't matter that I am with a woman, as long as we are happy. My daughters are fine with us as a couple now and they all love her, too.

My girlfriend has been there for my daughters and me when I needed her. When I had to go into the hospital, she was the one who brought me there. She also took care of my children and brought them to my middle child's graduation, and she has helped us in many other ways, too. My girlfriend is my biggest inspiration. She inspires me to do things for myself, like going for my permit and license, going back to school/work and getting healthier. I know I can do anything I put my mind to thanks to all her love and support. I wouldn't have come this far without her. ▽

### Across from page 1

delicate. At the age of 3, she nearly died from scarlet fever. She was blonde, small, and quiet, with a moonlike oval face. Shorter and less lanky than my mother, she was also darker in personality. Keenly intelligent, serious, disciplined, and exacting, she succeeded well all through her school years.

In 1963, when I was born into the family, Aunt Norma had just graduated from high school. Though only seven years my mother's junior, Norma may as well have been a generation apart. For my mother Judy was a product of the conservative fifties, and Norma a product of the liberal sixties. While my mother tended house and looked after three daughters, my aunt listened to Jimi Hendrix and danced at the Casablanca in Harvard Square. She went to Woody Allen movies and drank French wines. She attended Beatles concerts in go-go boots, and drove across the country to California in a Volkswagen Beetle.

I sensed that I was different from an early age and I was inexorably drawn to Norma. Not only was she a model of a different generation from my parents, but she was different in other ways, too. Until I was eleven, we lived on the bottom floor of my grandparents' house. Two memories are forever etched on my mind. One is of Norma clomping around at 6 a.m. in her high heels, getting ready for work. Another is of my family sitting promptly at 5:30 for dinner. My father sits at the head, the reigning king. Then in walks my Aunt Norma from the cold, laden with books, returning from her night classes at Northeastern University.

My parents' attitude towards my emulation of Aunt Norma has always been a conflicting message. On the one hand, Norma was the first woman in all of my family to obtain a university degree and a career. Certainly my parents have supported my educational and career achievements. But Norma also has never married, and my parents were deeply worried that I would be "just like Norma." Indeed I have not married, but not for the same reasons as my aunt. Over the years my Aunt has had trouble with relationships. Her darker personality and negativity have become more pronounced. Despite her intelligence, wit, and uniqueness, I am not sure if she a very happy person. This troubles me, but I love my Aunt Norma. And if I look back on my childhood, I cannot imagine my growing up without her. ▽

### Older from page 5

probably just as wise and funny (and sexy) when she was younger, too!

Having a friendship with another queer-identified woman who is older than I am is such a gift. It is important as we create family for ourselves that we should be reaching across the age divide and supporting each other. This isn't really built into our social patterns so it sometimes takes a conscious effort to make it happen.

For myself, it feels like a good balance to feel older and younger at different moments and learn from both perspectives. ▽





## Book Review:

*Tomboys! Tales of Dyke Derring-do*,  
edited by Lynne  
Yamaguchi and

Karen Barber (Alyson Publications, Inc., 1995)

*Reviewed by Cathleen Finn*

For all those who once were or still consider themselves to be tomboys, or tomboy admirers, this is the book for you! In the introduction, the authors state that "[they] wanted to include as many voices as [they] could, without making the collection redundant" and I think they were successful in their endeavor. In fact, the sense of similarity among the stories reminds me of the feeling I got when I first heard other bisexuals talk about their stories. There is a pattern and a sameness that comes through despite individual differences that might initially separate us.

A good part of myself was uncovered and reclaimed when I started the process of coming out. I started recalling my earlier attractions to girls and later women, and this naming of my powerful feelings was quite liberating to me. No longer was I using an internalized homophobic lens to judge my feelings for girls, it all suddenly made sense to me.

I had a similar experience reading *Tomboys! Tales of Dyke Derring-do*. Suddenly many of the experiences I had as a non-feminine girl were reexamined through a nonjudgmental lens. On my way to becoming an out bisexual I was a young girl who wanted to have "boy" toys and refused to wear dresses unless they had pockets in them. Also, I was the girl who didn't understand when her friends in junior high school started to change who they were in order to be attractive to boys.

There are many stories in this book that I had to laugh out loud when reading because I recognized so much of myself in them. Stories include crushes between girls, and some painful experiences of girls who were forced into rigid gender roles by misguided authority figures. Most often this rigidity was exemplified by girls having to wear dresses to school. Other times there was a defining moment in the girl's life when she was suddenly singled out from an activity such as playing sports just because she is a girl. In other somewhat rarer stories, girls had mothers who finally gave in to their daughter's wishes like giving the desired

cowboy outfit and six shooters for Christmas.

My favorite story is "Summer Showdown" by Pat Griffin, which tells the story of a girl who was the pitcher for her neighborhood's softball games. The fact that she is the only girl on the team wasn't even an issue until an older "tough" boy wants to play. I don't want to give it away, but one of the best lines is this: "I learned to appreciate the special malicious satisfaction there is in beating a guy who considers himself my better just because he's a guy." This reminded me of several events in my own life, including my catching a line drive that my older brother hit at a neighborhood picnic that would have been at least a triple had I not stopped it.

In addition to being a comprehensive book, it has wonderful design elements where parts of a story are echoed graphically on the page to draw out its resonance. Another added bonus is the inclusion of a picture of Alison Bechdel (of "Dykes to Watch Out For" fame) in full tomboy glory on a riding lawn mower in her back yard. The one caveat to the collection is that it is pretty lesbian centric in its view of tomboys as adults. I put this aside and said to myself that all of us were tomboys before we came up with new words to divide us. ▽

## GLBT People Over 60

The LGBT Aging Project of Greater Boston and JSI Research & Training Institute are conducting local focus group discussions with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people over 60. The groups will concentrate on determining which community-based home care services (such as shopping and homemaking, personal care, volunteer visitor programs, back-up help for your friends and family) feel accessible to you as a LGBT elder in the Greater Boston area. You don't need to have used home care services to participate in these discussions. We're looking for your opinions and life experiences.

Different focus group discussions will be held in March, April and May of 2003, 3-5 p.m. with a light supper provided. There will also be a focus group in the evening for LGBT people of any age who spend significant time helping a partner, friend, or family member who's over 60. Call 617-522-6700 x 307 for dates, or email [lgbt@ethocare.org](mailto:lgbt@ethocare.org). The groups will be held at Ethos, 555 Amory Street, Jamaica Plain. You'll also receive a \$30 stipend as a "thank you" for your time. ▽

## Latin and Swing Dance Classes

Liz Nania is offering new dance classes to keep you warm this winter. There are some six-week classes at West Roxbury School of Dance: Starting Mon, Jan. 27: Swing for Beginners at 7:15 p.m.; Salsa & Merengue for Beginners at 8:15 p.m. There are also six-week classes at the OUT to Dance Studio in Roslindale: Starting Tue, Jan. 28: Salsa Level 2 at 8 p.m.; Lindy Hop 1 at 7 p.m. The Roslindale classes are limited to 8; register with a partner if possible, or call studio for occasional partner matching. OUT to Dance! warmly welcomes folks of any age, race, sexual orientation, body size or level of dance ability. More info at [www.outtodance.com](http://www.outtodance.com) or contact Liz Nania at 617-363-0029 or [liz@outtodance.com](mailto:liz@outtodance.com).



The Twin Cities in Minnesota is hosting this year's BECAUSE (Bisexual Empowerment Conference: A Uniting and Supportive Environment) 2003 Conference. With the theme of "The Art of Being Bi" the twelfth annual conference will be held April 11-13 at the Hilton North. BECAUSE is THE conference for bisexuals in the midwest. The theme will explore the contributions that bisexuals have made to the arts and also what contributions artists have made to the bisexual community. Visit [www.tcbop.org/BE-CAUSE](http://www.tcbop.org/BE-CAUSE) for complete information.

## Don't Put Me In a Box! *Part I*

By Robyn Ochs

**L**ast year I was asked by *In the Family* magazine to write an essay addressing the question "Why do so many women who easily admit to having male and female lovers refuse the label 'bisexual'?"

What a great question! As a bisexual activist and scholar, I had long been wondering about this myself. So many women seem to be allergic to "the b-word." Women have a variety of reasons for avoiding a bisexual label. Some women reject bisexual because they don't like ANY label. Some privately identify as bisexual but do not want to deal with other people's fear and stereotyping. Others are not sure whether they are "bisexual enough" to call themselves bisexual. Some feel that their experience with a person of a different-from-usual sex is a one-time-only happening and as such insufficient to motivate them to change their identity. Some women reject the label "bisexual" because they feel that another label, such as "lesbian" better meets their current needs. And finally, some reject the bisexual label because they believe that the "bi" in "bisexual" reifies the binary sex/gender system.

In preparation for this essay, I sent out a few e-mails seeking input from women who fall into this category of not wanting to label themselves "bi" even though they have had both male and female partners (and/or attractions). Within 36 hours, I had heard back from 36 women. Below are some of their responses.

In the spring of 2001, Ann Heche was interviewed by Barbara Walters on 20/20. Walters asked Heche, who had just come out of a very public relationship with comedian Ellen DeGeneres and was now engaged to a man, "Do you consider yourself bisexual?" Ann replied, "I do not label myself bisexual. Nor do I label myself straight or gay." One third of the respondents shared Ann Heche's distaste for labels. Some women said that they resist labels, period.

"I decided that my sexuality was too complicated and ever-changing to pinpoint on a line, so I came up with the undefined thing (it's NOT the same as undecided). I won't limit my love to words or put it in a box (even if the box has pretty ribbons)."

"The very accurate term 'bisexual' has

the unfortunate side effect of sounding important, or like it should be capitalized, or worn emblazoned on a purple baseball hat.

Others expressed a desire to separate themselves from the stereotypes associated with bisexuality.

"Bisexual is such a strong word. To many people it implies that you are seeking relationships with both genders consistently. For many straight men, they only think it's an opportunity to get two women in bed with them at the same time."

Some people feel that their attractions have nothing to do with sex/gender.

"I just like people and the best thing to really label myself as is 'sexual' I suppose. Sexuality, for me, does not involve gender."

"I used to use the term 'bisexual' to describe myself but now I no longer do. It is a stereotype like any other. I'm not straight, I'm not gay, I'm not bi, I'm just me, Pepper. I love people, not genders. I don't stereotype and label myself because I have the ability to love anyone regardless of gender, race, religion, age etc. because I have an open mind and that is all one needs. No labels, just openness and the ability to potentially love anyone regardless."

"Bi implies that there are only two sex/genders!"

This is one answer that would have been rare 10 or 20 years ago, but was a reason given by one third of my respondents.

"I am attracted to both men and women but don't identify as bisexual for many reasons. The main reason is that I spend a lot of my time in the transgendered community. Lots of my friends ID as trans in some way MTF, FTM or more often somewhere in between. As a gender activist I feel like I can't label my sexual identity with a word that simply by it's use upholds the binary gender system."

"I don't like the word 'bisexual' because I



don't want to reinforce the gender binary—I'm attracted to people of more than two genders."

"I date people who ID as men, women, trans, boi, boy, grrrl, intersexed, hermaphrodite and a whole slew of other gender-related terms. Their genitalia ranges, their hormones range, their chromosomes range... How can I possibly classify myself as bisexual given this? Doing so would do a disjustice to both my political and social beliefs as well as to the identities of my partners."


"I'm not bisexual. I'm sexual. I have sex with people who I find attractive and intriguing. I don't limit myself by outdated systems of categorization like genitalia or gender."

"But isn't bi 50/50?"

For some women, it's hard to identify as bi without having had a "real" relationship with a woman. There are many women who have a

history of relationships with people of one sex, but who have fallen in love (or in lust) at some point with someone of the unexpected sex. Often, this is perceived as a one-time only event unlikely to be repeated. Lesbian sexpert Joann Loulan was a good example of this: when she fell in love with a man, she emphasized that she remained a lesbian, that she was attracted only to this one man, and did not generalize her feelings to men as a category.

"As for sex, well, I'm certainly attracted to male people a lot more often than female people, which is one reason not to call myself bisexual—it seems misleading. ... I don't feel right calling myself bisexual when I haven't had sex with someone female."

"I'm not sure I have a right to call myself bisexual. Most of my attractions are toward women." 

*Part II of "Don't Put Me In A Box" will appear in the April/May issue of BiWomen.*

## 30+ Multicultural Queer Women's Rap

Every Thursday 7-8:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center the 30+ Multicultural Queer Women's Rap meets. This is a social group for queer women over 30 from all cultural backgrounds, designed to build community and break down barriers. The discussion topics address both the similarities and the differences within the group. The Women's Center is at 46 Pleasant Street in Cambridge, closed T is Central Square. For more information, contact 617-354-8807.

## Poetry

### The Five Truths By Frances Donovan

You wanted me to write a short story  
about a hotel room in Provincetown—  
how two women might have arrived there  
and whether or not they made love,  
amidst the tacky furniture, over or under  
the hideous bedspread. You wanted me to describe  
how one might have let out a hoarse cry at the climax,  
and the other died at the hands  
of a jealous acupuncturist,  
the wife of one woman.

But I am writing you this poem instead.  
What's more important is the story you told me at breakfast,  
the one you told while all the while,  
a spider spun its web behind you  
in the corner of that white room.

It was the butterfly outside the window,  
who reminded you of all that grief.

I do not know the rules for telling other people's stories.  
Growing up as I did, I am concerned

with what the rules might be.  
You know best how to tell  
of the five white butterflies that appeared above your bed,  
in the Bronx,  
in a fifth-floor  
tenement apartment,  
in the middle of a heat wave.  
You know best how to say how they got there.

To attach my own truth to other people's stories,  
that seems to be against the rules.  
Still, I would count them for you, for the Elsa who woke,  
half-wreathed in sleep, groggy for weeks,  
to see them hanging there, with their delicate message:

One for the earth, his body  
One for the water, his blood  
One for the air, his breath  
One for the fire, his spirit  
and the fifth for what remains when he is gone.



## GLBT Peer Listening Line

Volunteers needed. Are you queer? 25 years old or younger? Do you want to help your community? The Peer Listening Line of Fenway Community Health is in need of volunteers to staff its nationwide, toll-free helpline for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth. All calls are free and confidential. If you self-identify as GLBT and have 5 hours per month to spare then contact coordinator Jim Maynard for an application and information. A new volunteer training will be held in February and the class fills up quickly so if interested, e-mail or call soon. Jim Maynard, Program Coordinator GLBT Helpline/Peer Listening Line Fenway Community Health, 617-927-6242, jmaynard@fenwayhealth.org.



### *New CD for Skott Freedman*

*Interviewed by Ellyn Ruthstrom*

*Skott Freedman is a 23-year-old out bi singer/songwriter. He will have his Boston CD release party at The Kendall Cafe on Monday, February 10th.*

*Some of our readers have probably heard your CD Skott Freedman, what is your new one like? Any new directions?*

The new CD, "Some Company," is a bit darker than my previous recordings...the past two years have been full of lessons for me, some tougher than others. I've probably learned more in the past year than in any other year of my life! From losing my record deal to signing with an unproductive agent, I've learned a lot about the music business. On the more personal side of things, ending a 4-year relationship and family struggles certainly took its toll on me as well. This album is all about raw honesty...nothing's sugar coated here. Unlike my last CD which featured a full band, it's just me and the piano this time. I wanted it to have a real "you, me, and a piano in a room" kind of feel. I'm really excited with the way it turned out.

*How is the songwriting experience for you? Do you have a technique that works for you?*  
It all depends on the song...I've never been the type to sit down and think "Ok, I need to write a song...on, um, let's go with love." I write because it's how I express myself...my songs are personal and if they aren't about me, they're about ones around me or experiences I can observe. I've always joked the piano is my therapist...it's how I get all my business out. Sometimes the words come first, sometimes the music. I never try to force it because art isn't something we can tame.

*How have you been finding bi community in the cities and towns that you travel to?*

The bi communities have been wonderfully supportive and I can't say enough about how much I've appreciated all the e-mails and letters I've received because of my activism. I feel like we are a community that's really building and we're going to start to see a whole lot of changes in the near future regarding bisexual acceptance. Safety in numbers, right?

*I hear you were at the International Bisexual Conference in Sydney, Australia. What was that like?*

That was unlike any other experience in my life...I've felt pride before at festivals, a sense of community...but to have hundreds of people show up around the world at a conference solely on bisexuality, it was amazing. Everyone was so friendly, it was such a comfortable atmosphere...it just seemed like everybody's guard was down. It was like finding a missing piece of the puzzle for me.

*What were the Gay Games in Australia like? How did the Australians respond to your music?*

The Gay Games were wild...would you believe they reported having more participants in the Gay Games than the Sydney Olympics?! Sydney turned queer overnight...everywhere you went there was this overwhelming sense of community. It also gave me much more of an outlook of LGBT rights on the global scale...too often I think it's easy to only stay focused on our own agendas and struggles. By meeting so many people from all around the world, it really opened my eyes as to how lucky we are in America despite the obvious inequalities we still face. Some people couldn't even get to the Gay Games because their countries wouldn't grant them visas to go to such an event!

Musically, the response was warm and welcome...they gave me lots of press coverage and I had great attendance at the shows. I also performed at the Sydney Opera House one night which was a lifelong dream and gave me a feeling I can't express and will never forget.

*You received an Out Music Award this year for Best New Recording-Male, what sort of response have you had from that?*

I've received lots of press coverage because of the award and it put me more on the map as a queer singer/songwriter breaking the surface. It's such a treat this time that I'm coming out with a new CD and papers are waiting to review it! It's like a dream...and to think two years ago I was debating going on to grad school to get my Master's in Speech Pathology. Life is too short to skip out on your dream. Go for it I say, if it doesn't happen...revise. ▽



## CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

### February 25 ♦ Tuesday

#### BBWN Pizza and Brainstorming Meeting, 6-7

p.m. for the eating and socializing. Meeting at 7 p.m. Come and relax with some great women and throw around some ideas of what you'd like to see the organization do in the coming year. The meeting will be at the BRC Office at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St., Boston. Nearest T is Back Bay on the Orange Line and Copley on the Green Line. We'll head over to Club Cafe afterwards to reward ourselves for creative thinking. Call Ellyn at 617-623-5535 to let her know you'll be attending.



### February 26 ♦ Wednesday

**Bi Coffee and BiHealth, 7:00 p.m.** Biversity and BiHealth are again teaming up for a social event and to distribute bisexual health information at the Diesel Cafe in Davis Square. Come join in the fun and the educational opportunity. Diesel is located at 257 Elm Street in Somerville. T stop is Dave on the Red Line.

### March 2 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch, 1 p.m.** We're trying out a new place this month, conveniently located in Harvard Square, Cambridge. It's Veggie Planet at 47 Palmer Street (at Club Passim). As the name suggests, it's vegetarian food. T is Harvard Square on the Red Line.

### March 3 ♦ Monday

**Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-8:45 p.m.** at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. See February 10th.

### March 4 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m.** Topic: "Dialogue Between Lesbians and Bi Women." See February 4th.

### March 5 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m.** See February 5th.

### March 11 ♦ Tuesday

**Queer Married Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m.** at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. See February 11th.

### March 12 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m.** See February 11th.

### March 15 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Brunch, 11:00 a.m.** Potluck Brunch at Mycroft and Sheeri's. We'll provide scrambled eggs, pancakes, fresh squeezed OJ and an assortment of

jams, jellies and butters (apple butter, pumpkin butter, regular butter, etc.). Bring yourself and either a dish or a few dollars to cover expenses. 15 Hollis St. #2, Cambridge. Contact 857-205-9786 or awfief@cs.brandeis.edu for more information.

**BiWomen Submissions Deadline.** This issue's theme is "Why Bi?" See page 2 for more ideas. Send submissions to: BiWomen, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA, 02140 or e-mail to nellythrustmor@aol.com.

### March 18 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m.** The topic is: "Sex." See February 4th.

### March 20 ♦ Thursday

**Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m.** See February 5th.

### March 23 ♦ Sunday

**BBWN Potluck Brunch, noon.** We'll be gathering at Debra's in Newton Highlands (right near the T stop) for food and conversation. For those who would like, bring along percussion instruments and we'll make a little music after the socializing. Contact Debra for directions, 617-244-3904, debleib@rcn.com.

### March 25 ♦ Tuesday

**BiWomen mailing, 7 p.m.** at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807. Can you say label, stuff, and seal? Help BBWN get the newsletter out to women around the country. Socialize during and after, when we'll head to Central Square for a cuppa.

### March 26 ♦ Wednesday

**Bi Coffee and BiHealth, 7:00 p.m.** See February 26th.

Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

## Ongoing Events

### Wednesdays:

**Gendertalk, 8:30-9:30 p.m.** on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

### Women's Club Nights

**Every Third Saturday:** Glitter Switch: Drag/Karaoke and dancing at Hollywood KTV, 41 Essex Street, Chinatown T, Boston. 10 p.m.-2 a.m. \$10 cover.

**Sundays:** Queer night, 9 p.m.-1 a.m., the Milky Way, 403 Centre St, Jamaica Plain. DJ and dance floor.

**Thursdays:** Dyke Night at the Midway Cafe, 3496 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain. Pool table 8-10, DJ with dancing 10-2.

## BiWomen wants you!!!



### SUBSCRIPTION RATE

for BiWomen  
(sliding scale)

- \_\_\_ \$0-\$20 (pay what you can)
- \_\_\_ \$20-\$30 (suggested)
- \_\_\_ \$30-\$100 Extra Special Donor
- \_\_\_ Renewal
- \_\_\_ New Subscriber

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140



## The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

## Ongoing Events

### 1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

**Bi Women's Rap.** 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

### 2nd Tuesdays:

**Married Bi Women's Discussion Group,** 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

### First Wednesdays, Third Thursdays:

**NEW DAY: Coming Out as Bisexual,** 7-9 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

# CALENDAR

## February 2 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch,** 1 p.m. Several months ago Biversity accidentally had a great brunch at the Cottonwood Cafe. This time we're going to schedule it for real. The cafe is located at 222 Berkeley Street in Back Bay. Nearest T stops are Arlington and Copley on the Green Line and Back Bay on the Orange Line.

## February 3 ♦ Monday

**Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group,** 7:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. The group discusses issues relevant to women in the poly community, especially those of interest to queer women. It ranges from social chatting to more in-depth discussions, depending on what people want to talk about each month. All self-identified women are welcome! Questions to Rosa at rcarson@wso.williams.edu

## February 4 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center,** 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Topic: "Relationships Between Lesbian and Bi Women, including friendships, dating, etc." Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

## February 5 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual,** 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

## February 9 ♦ Sunday

**BBWN Potluck Brunch,** 11 a.m. at Lynn's new apartment in East Arlington, close to the Red Line. Bring a potluck dish to share. If there's snow on the

ground, we can build snowpeople in the backyard! Call for directions: 781-648-3347.

## February 10 ♦ Monday

**Skott Freedman at The Kendall Cafe,** 9:30 p.m. show. (See page 10 to read about Skott.) The Kendall Cafe is at 233 Cardinal Medeiros Ave in Cambridge. Contact 617-661-0993 for info.

## February 11 ♦ Tuesday

**Queer Married Women's Discussion Group,** 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. Contact Denise at dpp1029@aol.com for information. Meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Call 617-354-8807 for directions.

## February 12 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting,** 7-9 p.m. All bi community members welcome to attend. The meeting is on the fourth floor of the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. in Back Bay.

## February 15 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Brunch,** 11:30 a.m. Brunch will be at Doyle's at 3484 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain, between the Green Street and Forest Hills stops on the Orange Line.

## February 18 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center,** 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Personal Ads. Bring an ad you particularly like. We may try to write our own." See February 5th.

**Bi Workshop at MIT,** 7:30 p.m. Robyn Ochs will be facilitating a workshop on bisexuality in Room 4-370. Free and open to the public. See [www.robynochs.com/schedule.html](http://www.robynochs.com/schedule.html) or e-mail [ochs@bi.org](mailto:ochs@bi.org) for details.

## February 20 ♦ Thursday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-9 p.m. See February 5th.

**Bisexual Resource Center Volunteer Mailing,** 6-9 p.m. Come help the Bisexual Resource Center get our February fund-raising mailing out the door. Meet at the Wainwright Bank Community Room at 250 Elm Street in Davis Square, Somerville across from the Diesel Cafe. Nearest T stop is Davis on the Red Line. This is a great opportunity to do a little volunteer work while hanging out with a few friends. Some basic munchies will be provided; the Diesel Cafe is right across the street afterwards.

## February 24 ♦ Monday

**Mixed Gender Poly Support Group,** 6:30-8:45 p.m. This group is intended as a supportive environment to talk about poly-related issues in your life, to ask questions, or just to hear what other people have to say. At Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland Street, Boston.

## Support BBWN with Your Used Books, CDs, VHS tapes, and DVDs!

Long-time member Gail Zacharias is helping BBWN with fundraising by listing the used books, etc on various online channels. 40% of the sale price will be donated to BBWN. If you have books to donate, please bring them to the BRC office, or contact Robyn ([ochs@bi.org](mailto:ochs@bi.org), 617-413-2717) to arrange for book transfer.

The books must be in reasonably good shape—in particular, all pages must be present and readable (some highlighting and underlining is ok if it doesn't obscure the text), and the cover must be present and firmly attached to the pages (it's ok for the dust jacket of a hardcover to be missing). And the books mustn't be smelly (e.g. musty or smoky), since Gail will be storing them in her home!

**CALENDAR** continues on page 11



## Why Bi?

### Being True to My Own Path

By Liz

I came out at the age of 19 as bisexual but quickly identified as lesbian because I knew that it was what I should do if I wanted to meet a girlfriend and be accepted into a female-centered, activist group. This was the advent of the women's liberation movement, and I wanted to be part of the 1970s lesbian community. Feminist consciousness-raising was my roadmap to self-exploration, as uncertain as a mountain climb. At that time, I also became aware of my attraction to a female friend, though I couldn't face the awareness of my sexual feelings until after we were no longer friends and she moved somewhere else. The next step was my attempt to meet someone by going to a lesbian bar, and then other activities in an urban environment.

I was out as a lesbian through most of my twenties; most of my social network were lesbian separatists and I might have embraced their viewpoints except that I had lesbian friends who were mothers of sons (and stuck struggling with no community support). Although I had brief sexual experiences, I didn't find a lover and couldn't understand why intimacy and sex were so acutely difficult for me throughout my young adulthood. It took years for me to understand that I was a child sexual abuse survivor—physically abused by my father (who died when I was 13) but also sexually abused by my mother throughout my youth. I had talked to a friend once about my mother's physical treatment of me and she had said she didn't think it was "normal."

But it still took the greater national awareness of incest, an article about female-female incest, and years of therapy for me to see the connection to my choices to leave home at age 16, join a cult, rebel against authority, my inability to "fit in" anywhere as a girl, and my later relationship problems. It would be easier if I could say that my developed self-awareness led to fewer life problems. The long-term trauma of incest is that it affects everything else in a person's life—especially relationships as an adult.

**Path** continues on page 4

On the topic of "Why Bi?" I will have to quote my favorite candy bar (Almond Joy) ad: "Sometimes you feel like a nut, sometimes you don't." I like to have it all: romance, love, passion, friendship, the total package (genital-type not important). As long as I get to be the princess. And this princess loves her chocolate with nuts and without.

-Abby

### Oysters and Butter

By [REDACTED]

I consider myself bisexual for a number of reasons, most importantly because I am sexually attracted to both women and men. I came out to myself as bisexual at age 18, after people began seeking me out and asking me questions about gender and sexuality. It was during these musings that I had my own epiphany that sexuality/gender indeed was fluid (one of those situations where your theory is ahead of your reality, but one day reality slams on its brakes, giving you whiplash). After I had this epiphany and accepted it promptly as the reality, further conversations and situations solidified this.

The best class I ever took in college, *Human Sexuality* (circa 1993), taught by Dr. Wendy Stock (my favorite teacher ever), confirmed the validity of this identity when she discussed the Kinsey scale. I find the Kinsey scale is a useful tool to gauge where I am currently at, compared to the past. I am definitely a bit more heterosexual or homosexual depending on my romantic situation and peer group. I love how my place on the scale subtly fluctuates throughout the years.

I remember thinking how unusual it was that although Dr. Stock's class was full, she kept allowing more students to circumvent the size stipulation, personally autho-

**Oysters** continues on page 5

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## Volunteers of the Month

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Gail Zacharias  
Robyn Ochs  
Deb Morley  
Wayne Bryant  
Stephanie Green  
Liz  
Pantherrr  
Linda H.  
Marcia Diehl  
Debra

---

And many more  
fabulous people!  
You know who  
you are!

*BiWomen* is published bi-monthly.

### Editor:

Ellyn Ruthstrom

**Printed on  
recycled paper**

*The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.*

## Why Bi? Why the hell not!

**M**aybe I'm just getting an attitude in my old age, but I'm just so tired of the fact that people who are attracted to more than one sex, or have sex with more than one sex, or love more than one sex can't and won't identify as bisexual. It's their loss as far as I'm concerned because I think the bi community is an amazingly diverse and open-hearted place to spend time in.

It's unfortunate for them though in a lot of ways. If they don't identify as bi then they probably won't try and find the local bi groups in their community and feel the support that these groups have offered to thousands. They probably won't attend any of the many regional, national, and international bi conferences that are held every year around the world. They won't participate in bi discussion groups and hear that their life experience is similar to so many others and feel that validation. And if they don't get their official bisexual identification card they won't get the free blender! They don't know what they are missing.

I remember watching Anne Heche after her breakup from Ellen DeGeneres and in her typically self-absorbed way she categorically said that she wasn't bisexual because *her* philosophy is that she just loves the person, it's not about anything else. Hello?! You know, if you are that thick then even a new blender isn't going to help you.

To anyone in the local Boston community, is anyone interested in helping with the newsletter? Besides always looking for people to write for the newsletter (and for that you don't have to live in Boston) it would also be great if someone would like to help proofread the issue. This would involve reading the final (or nearly final) version of the newsletter. It's probably about 2 hours of work every other month and you would know way ahead of time when the day to do it would be. Contact me if you are interested at nellythrustmor@aol.com.

*Ellyn Ruthstrom*

## NEXT IN *BiWOMEN*

The *BiWomen* theme for  
June/July is:

### Commitment

What does commitment mean to you in your work, your love life, your relationships with others? What does commitment mean to you as a bisexual person? Biphobia suggests that bis can't be committed, is that true? What have been different ways you've been committed to people or to passions in your life?

**Deadline: May 16, 2003**

## Future Issues in 2003

**August/September**  
*Healing Paths*

## PLEASE SUBMIT TO *BiWOMEN* !

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, black-and-white art, news, and views to:

*BiWomen*

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to

NellyThrustmor@aol.com

***If you do not want your name  
published, please tell us.***

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by the authors and artists.





Sarah hosted a great brunch in Jamaica Plain in January. The food was incredible and people relaxed and chatted for several hours. Thanks, Sarah, for the hospitality!

## New Brunch Coordinator

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the new brunch coordinator, so please contact her at [dgm@ias.ga.unc.edu](mailto:dgm@ias.ga.unc.edu) if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! And check out the calendar on pages 11-12 for the brunches coming up in April and May. Hope you can join us.

## Members Meet to Discuss New Ideas

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

**O**n February 25th an energetic group of long-term as well as new BBWN members met to discuss the organization and what they would like to see happen in the coming year. In attendance were Susan, Deb, Ellyn, Robyn, Martha and Katrina. After some pizza, soda and introductions, the group started brainstorming ideas.

One idea that came up was the possibility of a regular "support" group forming for "tenured" bi women. This developed out of a mention by Robyn that a group called the Bi Vocals used to meet on a weekly basis back in the 80s that served as a support group for a bunch of bi women and that it lasted for many years.

There was some discussion about how this group would function differently than Tuesday's Bi Rap group. One key difference was that people felt there was a need for a place for bi women who wanted a sense of community and connection but did not need the "coming out" support in the same way any more. Though Bi Rap is a discussion group that has many topics, it has tended to be a very good place for women to find the bi community and to begin or continue their coming out process in a supportive space.

Robyn will continue to be BBWN's Treasurer and Gail will continue her great work on the newsletter database. Deb and Katrina volunteered to take on organizing the newsletter mailing nights and make sure the newsletter gets mailed at the post office.


Deb also volunteered to be the brunch

organizer. This involves finding interested hosts for the once-a-month brunches in members' homes and getting the information to the newsletter editor in time to be included in the calendar. (See sidebar for contact info.)

There was some fun brainstorming around other activities the group could sponsor, with many of them depending on the better weather of spring, summer, and fall. Hiking, biking, blueberry and apple picking, and visiting a beach were some of the top suggestions.

Robyn brought up the idea of having some fundraising action at some point this year to keep our account at a healthy level. Our main fundraiser of the year has historically been the Pre-Pride Brunch at the Community Church at Copley Square. We also make money with our button sales throughout the year. In the past, we've had some great holiday house parties with performances and dancing. Another idea that people liked was an auction that could also double as a fun social event or dance.

The group also did some great brainstorming on topics for the newsletter. Future themes will include: Healing Paths, Single Life, What is Dating?, Poetry, Families and Travel. (If you ever have ideas for themes please email them to [nellythrustmor@aol.com](mailto:nellythrustmor@aol.com).)

It was a very productive meeting and it is great to have a group of people donating their time to help the organization stay active. Stay tuned for notices of future meetings to stay on track. 



## Third Annual Conference on Gender

The National Conference on Gender will be a 3-day gathering of leaders, activists, academics, and students of gender rights May 17-19, 2003 in Washington, DC. Featured keynote by Judith Butler, author of *Gender Trouble*. Carol Gilligan, Riki Wilchins, and Patricia Ireland will also be featured speakers. And, don't forget the Great Big International Drag King Show. Workshops will include: "Listen up, Ladies" - Men Harassing Men; Top/Bottom, Butch/Femme: Roles and Beyond; Reforming GID: Gender Dysphoria to Gender Euphoria; Workplace Fairness: Gender on the Job; Gender and Parenting: Getting Beyond Pink and Blue; Gender and Sports. To Register visit <https://gold.he.net/~gpac/ngc/2003register.html>. Call American Airlines (the official GenderPAC carrier) at 800-433-1790 soon to get discounted airfare. Give them Star File #S1853AH. If you need financial help attending NCG, scholarships are available. Discounts are also available for groups of 5 or more. For details on scholarships or group rates email [ngc@gpac.org](mailto:ngc@gpac.org)

## Path from page 1


At 28, I finally had a wide circle of lesbian friends and was an activist (known by many), but I was terribly lonely and had not talked about these issues in therapy or to anyone. I was also working as a secretary in a lab where I was very isolated in a small, dark, formaldehyde-smelling room that I shared with my boss who was (fortunately) rarely there. There was one other employee that no one spoke to and that was an African-American man who washed the lab glassware all day. We became friends at work. I was out to him but knew that he was interested in me. We began a tumultuous four-year relationship.

Since we rarely saw each other on weekends, I continued to identify as a lesbian and it didn't impact my usual activities with my friends so I didn't have to deal with changing my "identification." When we broke up for the last time, I was very depressed and lonely. After a few months, I decided to place a personal ad as a bisexual seeking to meet someone—preferably a person of color—male or female. However, I didn't want to put the ad in the local gay newspaper as I felt my friends would all recognize me and I would be ostracized in the community. So, I put it in the alternative straight newspaper. It went into a personal classified section called "either/or/both." I received 28 responses—only 2 from women. I really wanted to meet a woman but it didn't happen as it turned out.

I got a letter from a man that I felt was everything I was NOT looking for, but he wrote the best and funniest letter of the bunch. And, he wrote that he was "looking for a woman who had pushed the boundaries of her life." I wanted to meet the person who'd written that phrase! So, I decided to meet him, and he was unstable but open-minded and non-homophobic—and he moved in with me on our third date. We lived together for two years and remained friends for about sixteen. The relationship with this man prompted me to change my self-identification to bisexual—although I now was very aware that the lesbian/gay community was on a continuum and that bisexual relationships were occurring in silence (yet with continued prejudice to openly identified bisexuals).

After we decided not to live together anymore—and I was in dire financial straits with no job—I decided to make a major move to a new locale in 1989. I introduced myself as bisexual and experienced the full brunt of the prejudice that my former bisexual friends had told me about. The lesbians I met were definitely not interested in a relationship with a bisexual woman, and I felt that I had to

"prove" my loyalty to them to be accepted. So, I maintained a (mostly) celibate lifestyle for the next decade and gradually became somewhat acceptable to gay/lesbian social groups. While I now again take on leadership roles in GLBT groups, I know that my bisexual identity prevents my full acceptance and I am a token whose acceptance comes with strings attached.

Why bi? Because I know that I want to be involved with someone who can understand me. And, with my particularly thorny and unusual life-path, that has been difficult enough. And, because I know that calling myself a lesbian or heterosexual would not make me feel a part of a community and fill a longing, that is just the price of being true to my own path...wherever it takes me. 

*Want to write for BiWomen? Send your submissions to [NellyThrustmor@aol.com](mailto:NellyThrustmor@aol.com).*

## Why Bi?

*By Linda H.*

*Why do you identify as bi?*

I have always been attracted to both sexes.

*When did you decide to identify as bi or at least consider it?*

I finally came to the realization 20 years ago that these bisexual feelings are not going away.

*What do you like about bi community?*


Acceptance of who I am and the ability to be around other women/men who feel the same and only want to be accepted for who they really are.

*What do you get out of reading BiWomen?*

Information on how other bi's are getting together, dealing with society and how we try to be accepted by the gay, lesbian and transgender community.

*Do you think you have a bi perspective on life?*

*What is that?*

I don't consider my perspective on life bi. I just live and let live, accepting people for who they are, not their sexual orientation, color of their skin or religion entering into how I take people. I have known gay, lesbian and transgender people all my adult life and have always accepted them for who they are. I have found that they, unfortunately, have a hard time accepting me for who I am. I have found they get angry when bisexuality is mentioned. 



## Why Bi?

By Pantherrr

When I was a freshman in college, I was dating a fellow who was part of a fraternity. He was homophobic, and would get wigged out whenever I sat in the living room of the frat house, reading *Playboy*. Then one day, as I was flipping through one of them, it was "flip, flip, she's cute... flipflipflip!" I realized I was interested in women then, took some time to try anything with another woman. My first attempt went badly, and put me off trying for over a year... when I did again. I realized why men tend to be fascinated with breasts, they're fun to play with when they're on another person! Seriously, I've played with women, still trying to find a woman that I can have a relationship with, it's just never "clicked." I am still attracted to/date men, therefore I am bi.

*What do you like about bi community?*

It's cool to find others who you can go "people-watching" with, regardless of the gender of the passersby!

*Do you think you have a bi perspective on life?*

*What is that?*

Hrmmm, that anyone can be a potential partner, no matter what gender, I think allows you to see the world in a slightly different light... one can empathize with the het's, and the queer, and openly enjoy it all! (Ok, so it's frustrating when one side or the other declares you a fencesitter, but I like sampling the box of chocolates!) ▼



## Oysters from page 1

rizing their admission at their request. It turns out this was her last semester at a conservative public university in Texas, and she would be moving on to the more utopian land of California, where her unconventionality would be more acceptable.

It was the last day of her last semester that she came out to the entire, overstuffed room as bisexual. Alas, Texas needed her badly. We all desperately needed to hear her affirmations of the bisexual identity, especially coming from a scholarly academician (luckily I had this chance). My favorite quote of hers, which I feel captures the essence perfectly of bisexuality, is, "It's not a set of genitals walking up to me, it's a person."

It's this quote I still think of as I wonder whether the word bisexual describes me best, or perhaps pansexual, omnisexual, allsexual, or trysexual might be better. I definitely consider myself as someone who is attracted to more than one gender, and also turned on by nature, and I certainly believe there are infinite permutations of gender. However, I think I stick with bisexual for the fact that I have had romantic experience with people who term themselves either male or female, and that bisexual is still an orientation not as acceptable as hetero- or homosexual.

Until the time comes when it's truly a gender-free world with universally expected infinite combinations of sexuality/romance/gender characteristics, I will continue to predominantly use bisexual when outing myself to heterosexuals. However, I love meeting and conversing with people who are gender-savvy, providing opportunities for me to use more fanciful and inclusive terms when describing myself. The bottom line for me is that love and sex are possible with anyone. The world is indeed our oyster, and sexuality is the butter that makes it all go down that much smoother. ▼

## Leather Leadership Conference

Patrick Califia-Rice (the writer formerly known as Pat Califia) will be delivering the keynote speech at the Leather Leadership Conference, being held at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel April 11-13, 2003. Community organizers and activists will be convening for this annual conference for coalition building, leadership skills workshops, and other seminars with the goal of building a stronger leather/SM/fetish community. Many program items will be relevant to queer activists of all types, even non-leather/SM. Registration is \$90 at the door. Day rates also available. For more information, email [registration@leatherleadership.org](mailto:registration@leatherleadership.org) or visit [www.leatherleadership.org/lc7/](http://www.leatherleadership.org/lc7/).

Visit BBWN online at:  
**[biresource.org/bbwn](http://biresource.org/bbwn)**  
for a calendar listing of local  
bisexual events.



## North American Conference on Bisexuality

The 2nd North American Conference on Bisexuality (NACB 2003) will take place in San Diego, California on August 21-24, 2003. We are currently seeking proposals for papers, presentations, panel discussions, performances, and workshops in the following subject tracks: Activism/Organizing; Gender (includes all gender-specific workshops); Health; Media/Culture/Film and Video; Relationships/Families/Non-Bi Partners; Sexuality; Research/Theory; Spirituality/Personal Growth; Track X (other sessions). The deadline for proposals is June 15, 2003. For more information on how to submit a proposal, please go to: [www.bisexual.org/nacb/call4papers.asp](http://www.bisexual.org/nacb/call4papers.asp)

## Odd Duck in Both Ponds


By Trish M.

I identify as being bi because I enjoy both men and women even though I am exclusive with a woman right now. At this point in my life, I can't imagine just being with men or just being with women. Bi opens up a whole world for me out there, should I choose and embrace it. If something happened with my current relationship, I would like to be able to date/see who I want/when I want.

I guess I've been bi longer than I actually knew; but I knew there was something "missing" in my life for a very long time. I've had interest in women since before my teens, but didn't take any action on it until my early twenties. It's only been the last 4-5 years, with help from the internet, that I opened up and explored the bi part of myself and have no regrets in doing so, though there have been some problems. I've just started subscribing to *BiWomen*, but I hope to get a lot of information and others' perspectives on being bi; plus, I hope to get to meet others to make new friends.

I think being bi enables me to be more open and liberal about others and their

thoughts and beliefs, too. It helps me not to be prejudiced when I see "different" arrangements, etc. But being bi is not easy. I think of it as being the odd duck in both ponds sometimes. The straight community doesn't always understand or has their own perspective on what "bi" is; and the gay community doesn't always accept bis either because they sometimes think that bis are confused and don't know what or who they want.

Well, I feel I am a true bi. I like/love both men and women and their pros and cons. My life is richer and fuller (especially with my girlfriend in my life now) for being bi, and that will not change until the day I die. 

### Book Review:

*Burning the Sea*, by  
Sarah Pemberton  
Strong (Alyson  
Books, 2002)



Reviewed by Ellyn Ruthstrom

It pleases me a great deal to be able to review *Burning the Sea* in *BiWomen*. The author, Sarah Pemberton Strong, has been a part of the Boston community for a few years now and it's such a thrill to see this book be published by a well-known publisher and get some positive attention.

Strong has a wonderful writing style and the choice of a dual narrative fully brings across the intensity of the experiences of her two main characters. The book goes back and forth every other chapter between the voices of Michelle and Tollomi. Michelle is an American who travels, then travels some more, and has finally come to the Dominican Republic to connect to some long ago family legacy. Tollomi appears to be stateless or perhaps from everywhere and just happens to be at the airport at the right moment to help Michelle out of a jam with the customs officials.

When the officials keep Michelle's luggage but allow her to leave, Tollomi persuades her to share a cab into the city and from then on they become loyal traveling partners. By the time the two of them meet you already know that Michelle had a woman lover in Berlin, and soon enough you find out that Tollomi desires men. Yet the relationship

Review continues on page 10

### Bis on the Web

Next time you're out surfing the web, check out these two URLs.



#### [www.glbtq.com](http://www.glbtq.com)

This site is a brand new encyclopedia of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer culture with over 900 entries that deal with contributions that GLBTQ people have made to the arts and literature. I did a casual search of my own about bisexual topics and was impressed with not only the encyclopedia's ability to identify certain artists as bisexual, but also with the inclusive language used in more general topics.

**[www.bi101.org](http://www.bi101.org)** If you've got 5 minutes to spare, stop off at this site and participate in a survey. Bill Burleson, a Minneapolis bi activist, is writing a book about bisexuals and part of his research is coming from this online survey. You can partake in it whether you are in a current relationship or not.



# We Are Everywhere: A Random Encounter

By Marcia Deihl

As the demonstrations against an aggressive U.S. war on Iraq were winding down over President's Day Weekend, I attended an event in Cambridge called "Not My President's Day." Since it was sponsored by rock radio station WBCN (I remember feminist demonstrations in the early 1970s where they released baby chicks in the station as a protest against the station's misogynist vibe, such as calling women "chicks") and various Peace and Justice organizations, I thought it would be odd. So of course I went.

As I sat in the back, a greying 53-year-old bi activist and singer/writer who is still recovering from an intense and unhealthy relationship which I had to end last May, I felt sort of out of place and lonely. But then I saw a familiar exuberance of red curly hair. Debbie Block-Schwenk! She and her partner threaded their way in and sat in the front. Later she came back and visited with me. It was so nice to see a familiar bi face who had come into Cambridge for this event. I got to tell her about a video which we may get to show soon, an interview on East Coast Bisexual organizational origins made by a guy named Bill Burleson. A few minutes later, Annie Goglia and a few other women walked in, and Ann also came to my back row to visit and hand out her hand addressed post cards to Prez. Bush (good planning).

I felt less alone. And then: a miracle. In the middle of this well-meaning, but largely male, rock music anti-war performance, a tall lanky person with a platinum blonde pageboy haircut and army hat, knee high white boots, hot pants, and some sort of red, white and blue tiny spangly bra-top bounced on the stage and started baton twirling to a Queen song. "Look at that guy," Annie said to me. "I think it's a girl," I said. Then we discussed "she" and I said whatever it was, he/she was beautiful and we agreed that the performance was a much-needed zap of wacky glitz. I started clapping loudly and others joined in, but afterward, I heard most people saying they thought it was "weird." Well, yeah. Isn't that a good thing?

My favorite old protestors were Allen Ginsberg with his harmonium and zen chanting in the midst of self important shouting protestors and very, very serious macho police, or

the naked Presidential candidate in the late 60s whose slogan was "I have nothing to hide." "Penguin dust! I want penguin dust!" As Gregory Corso wrote in a poem about being too normal and leaving such a note for the milkman. Absurdity and originality wake you up.

I later met the baton twirler in person outside the bathroom. She was a tall young woman buckling up a snow suit pair of overalls which had a button photo of some Tibetan monk on the strap. She had Emily Litella glasses and sort of a happy geeky smile, and she proudly told me she had taught herself to twirl. She was in a world of her own, and a tall young man in an overcoat was looking on fondly. I felt fortunate to have met such a gutsy artistic unabashed human being; she made the day for me.

But after I got home, I realized it wouldn't have been the same without someone to share it with. How kind of the fates, the gods, serendipity, to send me those two wonderful bi girls. Who else could I have laughed and whispered with about gender and glitz with such abandon and approval? I believe in sisterhood and community, when many of my age peers think I'm naive and idealistic. They have kids and spouses and no time for such high fallutin' ideas. But I know sisterhood lives because I went home happy that I found my karma, my Cambridge home—a place of random genderfuck baton twirling androgynes and the people who appreciate them!

Thanks for being there!

Oh, and we WILL stop the war.



## 15th Annual Gulf Coast Womyn's Festival

April 17-20 Camp Sister Spirit will again host the Gulf Coast Womyn's Festival in Overt, Mississippi. This year's performers will include Lucie Blue Tremblay, Trish Williams, Shelley, Graf and more. There is a sliding scale entrance fee of \$95-225 for the four days. Visit [www.campsisterspirit.com](http://www.campsisterspirit.com) for all registration information.

This year Camp Sister Spirit celebrates its 10th year of existence. Congratulations to Brenda and Wanda for staying strong, working for social and economic justice, and making a safe space for so many in your community!



Annie hosted the BBWN brunch in November. She asked people to bring photos of themselves when they were younger and we guessed who was who.



## North American Conference on Bisexuality

San Diego is the site for the 2nd Annual North American Conference on Bisexuality August 21-24, 2003. There will be three days of interactive workshops, discussions, parties and entertainment. Conference tracks will include: Activism & Bi Organizing, Gender, Health, Media & Culture, Relationships & Family, Sexuality, Bi Research and Theory, and Spirituality & Personal Growth. The Radisson Hotel in San Diego is offering a special \$99 per room rate for up to 4 in a room. If you are interested in presenting at the conference contact Alexei\_Guren@msn.com. For other conference information contact Alexei or Luigi Ferrer, lferrer@bisexual.org, 305-669-3031 or visit [www.bisexual.org/events](http://www.bisexual.org/events).

# Don't Put Me In a Box! *Part II*

By Robyn Ochs

*Part I of "Don't Put Me In a Box" appeared in the February/March issue of BiWomen. In Part I Robyn shared a selection of responses that women who had had both male and female partners had to the label "bisexual." These responses continue in Part II. The entire piece was published in the Fall 2001 issue of In the Family: The Magazine for Queer People and Their Loved Ones.*

## Bi identity has so many negative connotations

Several women said that the word bisexual is "too hard." Stereotypes cited included the idea that people think bisexuals are just horny, sexually active/promiscuous people.

"I wish that someone would come up with a word that didn't have "sex" right in it. Self-identified bisexuals are sometimes seen as traitors, or as being in a state of transition (sliding down the slippery slope from straight to gay). Maybe a gay friend will say "Traitor" or a straight friend will say "Oh it was just a phase" and either way it makes me want to cry, so I try not to talk about it anymore, and just answer people's questions honestly with as few labels as possible."

"A bi identity can be seen as having too many disadvantages, and not enough perks. I have to deal with 'biphobia' (I got enough phobias to battle) and "gee-can i watch" from the boys at the bar, and frankly, bi folks don't get all the cool perks that 'gay' folks and straight folk do in terms of community, and resources. Oft times bisexuals get ostracized, or told that they can't be a part of things because they aren't "hardcore" enough to be lesbians, or gay men (or whatever)."

"I'm afraid that if I say I'm bisexual people are more likely to make assumptions about me that are really wrong."

"There's a lot of suspicion in the queer community toward bisexuals. If you declare yourself as one, people don't see you as queer, at best, and they see you as a trend follower. It's annoying not to

be thought of as a "real" homosexual, and my fear of being mocked discourages me from openly calling myself a bisexual."

"I think the problem with the word 'bisexual' is that it implies, at least in today's day and age, that you are attracted to everyone. Or at least to more people than, say, a straight person is. I don't believe this is true at all. ... Also, the term "bisexual" is pretty much taken to mean 'straight and gay at the same time.' I don't find this true either. There are periods in my life where I find myself looking at guys, and other times where I find myself looking at girls. Rarely, if ever, do I find myself hunting both sexes at the same time. I'm not saying that some days I wake up straight and some days I wake up gay (Hrm, today's a Wednesday...I think I'll be straight today) but rather that sex becomes more of an optional characteristic instead of a must-have. Sort of like being tall, or having long hair... For some reason, the word just doesn't work for me. Maybe I'm just too picky."

"I guess that I assume that bisexuals aren't really sure what they want instead of thinking of them as open to both men & women."

## Lesbian trumps bisexual

One fourth of the women who responded choose to identify as lesbian rather than bisexual. There were a number of reasons given. Some stressed the political power of the word lesbian or their desire to ally themselves with lesbians. Others are now in what they expect will be life partnerships and thus feel that their lesbian identity has overshadowed their bisexual identity. Others said that their home is centered in the "lesbian" community, where it would be very uncomfortable to maintain a bisexual identity.

"I see being out as lesbian as the best political statement you can make, and I've always felt more ties to the lesbian community, so I choose to make my political statement for lesbians, rather than bisexuals."



## But if it walks like a duck...

I've never met a label I didn't find problematic. To be totally honest here, I sometimes cringe at the passion with which some women tell me that they have (or have had) attractions and/or erotic experience with men and with women but then roundly insist that they are NOT, repeat NOT bisexual. No way, no how.

The bisexual label works for me. Calling myself bisexual means that I acknowledge in myself the capacity to be attracted to and sexual with people of more than one sex (notice I don't simply say men and women - that's because I know that there are more than two sexes), not necessarily at the same time, not necessarily to the same degree. To me, you can most certainly be bisexual without having "acted on it." Just like you can be a lesbian or straight person who has never had sex. After all, you know what you feel inside. And you can continue to be bisexual, even if you never end up acting on it, or even if you are in a monogamous relationship that lasts the rest of your life.

"I came out as lesbian 15 years ago, and I am so connected to my identity as a lesbian that it feels just plain wrong and not who I am, to change it in any way (even though I'm now attracted to men too); I'm afraid of giving up/losing some of my community that is strongly lesbian identified due to their judgment (real or perceived). Though I have used that word to describe myself in the past, it feels like after 10 years in a relationship with my partner... the term bisexual doesn't really seem to fit, except technically. What's that about? Why such passion? And what's so bad about identifying about bisexual, anyway?"

I have become, over time, less a believer that there is some sort of "essential" difference between people who use various words to describe ourselves. Lesbian, bisexual, queer, even "choose-not-to-label" - these are labels, name tags that we place on ourselves to give others information about who we are. These words mean different things to different women. I have been married to a woman (my life partner, we hope) for five years. I haven't slept with a man in close to a decade. Many other women with a story similar to mine would have by now "switched over" to the lesbian label. I haven't. I am happy to be grouped with lesbians. Queers too. But for me it is important that I be seen in full: past, present, and potential future, and that none of me be obscured or erased. We use words to describe ourselves, but these words are simply tools to

help us explain - to ourselves and to others - who we are. They have value as they can be used as landmarks to make us visible, and to help us find others with similar experiences, but in reality each of us has our own path and our own experience. And while this may not feel like a very stable foundation upon which to hang one's hat, it is in fact facing up to reality.

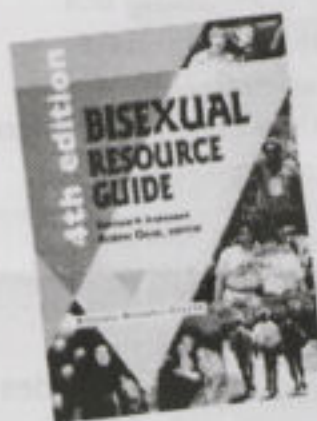
It can be very frustrating for those of us who identify as bisexual to see others reject the label we have worked so long and hard to create a space for. I am left with the question: is my bisexual activism about making it safe for these women to identify as bisexual? Or is it about making it safe for all of us to identify, or not identify, however we choose, and to be respected as we are.

My answer is: the latter. However, we still do live in a world in which people think in either/or binaries, and most people believe we are "either one thing or the other," and are uncomfortable with notions of fluidity. How can these "not bi" women be made visible so that they can help dispel these notions? This is the challenge that I put forth to all of us: let us respect one another, listen to each other's stories, and figure out ways that we can increase the space available for telling our truths. ▽

*Reprinted with the permission of the author. Robyn Ochs (ochs@bi.org) is the editor of the Bisexual Resource Guide (www.biresource.org/brg.html), and speaks and teaches about bisexuality and those who transgress our cultural binaries of gay/straight, black/white, and/or male/female.*

## Safe Colleges 2003

Tufts University will again be the site of the full-day free conference for queer students and allies to be held April 5. Keynote speakers will be Mary Bonauto of GLAD and David Eng of Columbia University. Workshops, film screenings, a poetry slam, and a dance and drag show! For more information, check out [ase.tufts.edu/lgbt/safecolleges2003/](http://ase.tufts.edu/lgbt/safecolleges2003/). Please register in advance on the Web site. Contact [safecolleges@tufts.edu](mailto:safecolleges@tufts.edu) with any questions.



Do you  
have your  
**Bisexual  
Resource  
Guide** yet?

To order, send check or money order for \$8, or get 2 for \$15 (payable to BRC), with your name and address, to:  
BRC, Dept. BBWN, P.O. Box 1026,  
Boston, MA 02117.

Or check out the BRC Web page at [www.biresource.org](http://www.biresource.org) to buy the Guide and other great bi products.



## BECAUSE 2003

The Twin Cities in Minnesota is hosting this year's BECAUSE (Bisexual Empowerment Conference: A Uniting and Supportive Environment) 2003 Conference. With the theme of "The Art of Being Bi" the twelfth annual conference will be held April 11-13 at the Hilton North. BECAUSE is THE conference for bisexuals in the midwest. The theme will explore the contributions that bisexuals have made to the arts and also what contributions artists have made to the bisexual community. Visit [www.tcbop.org/BECAUSE](http://www.tcbop.org/BECAUSE) for complete information.

## Who's Afraid of a Woman in Pants?

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

**A**pparently, folks in West Virginia still can't tell the difference between a man and a woman unless she's wearing a skirt. A new statue that will be placed on the Capitol grounds to honor West Virginia female veterans has been facing criticism by some who feel the form is just "not feminine enough."

Designed by sculptor Joseph Mullins, the stature depicts a muscular woman wearing a casual uniform of pants and a T-shirt. Mullins said depicting a woman in a skirt would have excluded many women veterans who did not wear such clothing. He said the statue is not a "runway model and not a Playboy bunny...It will look like a nice, big, strong girl who's been through military training."

Sen. Jon Blair Hunter, the committee's chairman seemed to have a difficult time deciding the sex of the statue and felt it should depict a woman in a skirt. "It was hard to tell from looking at it that it represented a woman," said Hunter. Dottie Alderman of South Charleston, a Marine veteran of the Korean War, said she was shocked when she saw the statue. "Mental toughness and courage does not need a rough exterior to get those qualities across," she said. One would

think you could also say that it shouldn't take a skirt to get across that the figure is female.

It's nice to know that women veterans are being honored for the work they've done. What a shame to have what a woman is wearing still be the focus of such an important honor. ▽

## The Kiss

By Debra

**T**here was this kiss I saw on TV last year on the show "Once and Again." It was between two 13-year-old girls. One of them knew she was gay and the other was shocked by her best friend's sexual orientation. Her friend hadn't told her. She'd heard it as a rumor at school and was afraid that the other kids would think she was gay even though it was clear that she liked boys. Well, the gay friend, Leslie, confronted Jessie because Jessie had been pulling away and Leslie was very hurt. This sounds like a soap opera—it wasn't. It was maybe three scenes in a multi-faceted family drama. Anyway, when Leslie made clear that all she wanted was to be friends and told Jessie how incredibly hurt she was, well— Surprise! Jessie, totally without realizing what she was doing, kissed Leslie right on the lips. It was the sweetest kiss I'd ever seen.



The sweetest kiss. Soft and gentle. A kiss I'm looking forward to. I know it's out there, this kiss. It's waiting for me. It also lives inside me. When I think of it I feel so connected to everything. I also feel a great longing. My whole being almost touching this force that the kiss has become for me. I want it. I want to feel someone's soft, delicate lips against mine. She, or maybe he is out there; awaiting their own kiss. One that will stir them so strongly that it will change who they are at the deepest level. As I have been changed. As what I've been looking for has become clear to me. A kiss. I never thought something so simple, something I saw for less than fifteen seconds on a TV show, would touch me as completely as this has. I don't know what else to say except that I know that my kiss is just around the next corner. ▽

### Review from page 1

Michelle and Tollomi have is anything but platonic. They have an almost immediate liking and understanding of each other and their travels only heighten the energy between them. Later in the book they are tested by extreme circumstances and still they only have each other to turn to.

But besides being a character-driven book, it also has quite a political core to it. Strong weaves a plot that includes the realities of radical politics, western imperialism, race and class inequities, and gay life in a macho culture.

Michelle is a wonderful queer woman character in a story that doesn't dwell on her queerness. We see her change and grow through quite traumatic events. Her strength is physical as well as emotional and she may have finally found the "home" that she needs.

*Burning the Sea* is a compelling read and the writing is at times extremely poetic. I hope we see more fiction from Strong coming our way soon. ▽



## CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

weather permitting) will take a spring walk in the Arboretum.

### May 5 ♦ Monday

**Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group**, 7-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. See April 7th.

### May 6 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Personal Ads." See April 1st.

### May 7 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual**, 7-8:45 p.m. See April 2nd.

### May 11 ♦ Sunday

**BBWN Brunch at Robyn's in Jamaica Plain**, Noon. Please bring the usual potluck dish and drinks to share. It's also Lilac Sunday and those interested can head over to the Arnold Arboretum after the brunch for a stroll together. Contact Robyn at ochs@fas.harvard.edu or 617-413-2717.



### May 13 ♦ Tuesday

**Queer Married Women's Discussion Group**, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. See April 8th.

### May 14 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting**, 6:30-8:30 p.m. See April 9th.

### May 15 ♦ Thursday

**Coming Out as Bisexual**, 7-9 p.m. See April 2nd.

### May 16 ♦ Friday

**BiWomen Submissions Deadline**. This issue's theme is "Commitment." See page 2 for more ideas. Send submissions to: *BiWomen*, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA, 02140 or e-mail to nellythrustmor@aol.com.

### May 17 ♦ Saturday

**Boston Youth Pride March and Festival**, Noon. Meet near the fountain at Copley Square around noon to show your support for GLBT youth and to march with the bi contingent. Volunteers are needed to carry the banner and staff the table. Call Wayne at 508-699-6612 or bryant@tdint.com.

**Biversity Picnic Brunch**. Will coincide with the Youth Pride events. Meet at the fountain outside the church at Copley Square. Copley Square on the Green Line is closest.

**Biversity Brunch**, 11:30 a.m. A favorite brunch spot, Johnny D's on Holland Street in Davis Square in Somerville always draws the biggest bi brunch crowd. The Davis stop on the Red Line is just across the street. **NOTE: This brunch was scheduled before it**

**was realized the Youth Pride was on the 17th. Email Wayne at bryant@tdint.com to see if it is going on or if the date has been changed.**

**The Dinner Party 2003**. Benefiting the Women's Care Fund at Fenway Community Health, an evening with dinner, dancing, and entertainment at the Westin Hotel, Copley Place. Tickets are \$125. For info call 617-267-8862.

**BBWN Dinner Party**, 7 p.m. For those of us who can't make the big ticket night out, let's meet up for a fun evening of food, film and fun. We did this last year and had a great time. Closer to the time, a place and movie will be selected. Contact Ellyn at nellythrustmor@aol.com.

### May 20 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "First Female Love." See April 1st.

### May 27 ♦ Tuesday

**BiWomen mailing**, 7-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center. Can you say label, stuff, and seal? Join us. Socialize during and after.

### June 14 ♦ Saturday

**THINK AHEAD to Boston Pride!!** The bi community comes out for visibility, politics, and a grand ole time for pride. Check in the next issue for details for the BBWN Pre-Pride Brunch and information on how to march with the bi contingent in the parade. Want to help with the plans? Contact Ellyn at nellythrustmor@aol.com.



## Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

### Ongoing Events

#### Wednesdays:

**Gendertalk**, 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

#### Women's Club Nights

**Every Third Saturday:** Glitter Switch: Drag/Karaoke and dancing at Hollywood KTV, 41 Essex Street, Chinatown T, Boston. 10 p.m.-2 a.m. \$10 cover.

**Sundays:** Queer night, 9 p.m.-1 a.m., the Milky Way, 403 Centre St, Jamaica Plain. DJ and dance floor.

**Thursdays:** Dyke Night at the Midway Cafe, 3496 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain. Pool table 8-10, DJ with dancing 10-2.

## BiWomen wants you!!!



### SUBSCRIPTION RATE

for *BiWomen*  
(sliding scale)

- \_\_\_ \$0-\$20 (pay what you can)
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BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140



## The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

## Ongoing Events

### 1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

**Bi Women's Rap**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

### 2nd Tuesdays:

**Married Bi Women's Discussion Group**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

### First Wednesdays, Third Thursdays:

**NEW DAY: Coming Out as Bisexual**, 7-9 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

# CALENDAR

## April 1 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Topic: "April Fools! I'm not a lesbian! (I'm not straight!)" Bring stories of surprising moments." Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

## April 2 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual**, 7-8:45 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

## April 5 ♦ Saturday

**Bayard Rustin Breakfast**, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Annual breakfast for GLBT people of color and their friends, held at the JFK Library. Urvashi Vaid is the keynote speaker. No charge. Take the Red Line to the JFK/UMASS station, take the free shuttle to the JFK Library (runs every 20 minutes).

## April 7 ♦ Monday

**Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group**, 7-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. The group discusses issues relevant to women in the poly community, especially those of interest to queer women. It ranges from social chatting to more in-depth discussions, depending on what people want to talk about each month. All self-identified women are welcome! Questions to Rosa at rcarson@wso.williams.edu.

## April 8 ♦ Tuesday

**Queer Married Women's Discussion Group**, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. The group is facilitated by Denise Garrow-Pruitt who can be contacted at dgarrow@rcn.com. Call 617-354-8807 for directions.

## April 9 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting**, 6:30-8:30 p.m. All bi community members welcome to attend. The meeting is at 29 Stanhope St. in Back Bay.

## April 13 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch**, 1 p.m.

Potluck Brunch at Mycroft and Sheeri's. We'll provide scrambled eggs, pancakes, fresh squeezed OJ and an assortment of jams, jellies and butters (apple butter, pumpkin butter, regular butter, etc.).

Bring yourself and either a dish or a few dollars to cover expenses. 15 Hollis St. #2, Cambridge.

Contact 857-205-9786 or awfief@cs.brandeis.edu for more information.



## April 15 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Lesbian-Bi Dialogue, Part II, continuing the discussion from March 4." See April 1st.

## April 17 ♦ Thursday

**Coming Out as Bisexual**, 7-9 p.m. April 2nd.

## April 19 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Brunch**, 11:30 a.m. Brunch will be at the Lindwood Grill at 69 Kilmarnock Street in Boston's Fenway area (very close to Thornton's). Nearest T stop is Fenway on the D branch of the Green Line.

## April 26 ♦ Saturday

**BBWN Potluck Brunch**, noon at Martha's in Wellesley, one block from the commuter rail Purple Line. Bring a potluck dish or drinks to share. After, we can take a hike in the area. Contact Martha for directions: 781-431-7644 or mewpj@attbi.com.

## April 28 ♦ Monday

**Mixed Gender Poly Support Group**, 6:30-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. This group is intended as a supportive environment to talk about poly-related issues in your life, to ask questions, or just to hear what other people have to say.

## May 4 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch at Doyle's** in Jamaica Plain, 1 p.m. The address is 3484 Washington Street, between the Green Street and Forest Hills stops on the Orange Line. After brunch, those who are interested (and

## Support BBWN with Your Used Books, CDs, VHS tapes, and DVDs!

Long-time member Gail Zacharias is helping BBWN with fundraising by listing the used books, etc on various online channels. 40% of the sale price will be donated to BBWN. If you have books to donate, please bring them to the BRC office, or contact Robyn (ochs@bi.org, 617-413-2717) to arrange for book transfer.

The books must be in reasonably good shape—in particular, all pages must be present and readable (some highlighting and underlining is ok if it doesn't obscure the text), and the cover must be present and firmly attached to the pages (it's ok for the dust jacket of a hardcover to be missing). And the books mustn't be smelly (e.g. musty or smoky), since Gail will be storing them in her home!

**CALENDAR** continues on page 11



## Commitment

### My Commitment to Recovery

by Cathy DeLuca

I started hating my body at age 12, and soon after began a journey that would affect every part of my life. I starved myself. I weighed myself everyday. I did more sit-ups than should be allowed by any one person. Eventually I started bingeing, because after years of restricting, my body was scared it wasn't going to be fed again. This has been the past 20 years of my life. A constant war with my body.

It wasn't until March of 2001 that I committed to getting better. I had hit bottom. I was severely depressed, and was bingeing almost every night. I was scared to be alone for fear of uncontrollably stuffing myself, hating myself more and more after each episode. I just couldn't take it anymore, and I decided that I needed to do everything I could to finally beat this thing. I had certainly made attempts over the years to address my eating problems—I read lots of books, went to therapy—I really did try. But when my life would pick up for whatever reason, and my eating problems would subside a bit, I just forgot about them. Not until two years ago did I enlist every resource possible, and completely commit myself to recovery.

I started seeing a therapist who has been absolutely amazing. I found an eating disorder support group through The Massachusetts Eating Disorder Association that has changed my life. It's given me a safe place to be myself, a place to talk about things that I never thought other people would understand. I've met the most amazing women through this group. I'm often struck by their courage and strength. I also kept reading books, writing in my journal, and talking through things with close friends.

**Recovery** continues on page 5



Robyn (right) and one of her favorite commitments, Peg.

### Commitment is So Many Splendid Things

By Robyn Ochs

Interestingly, when I first saw the topic for this month's BiWomen newsletter: "commitment," the first thing that came to my mind was the tired old question: can bisexual people fully commit themselves to a relationship? I wondered if I should write in all of the

reasons why I can, why commitment is simply not an issue for this bisexual. After all, my partner and I are now in our seventh year together.

Then a few days passed and I thought about it some more. Commitment, I realized, is about so much more than commitment to the person with whom you are in a romantic relationship.

And even within the context of a romantic relationship, commitment is also not inextricably tied to monogamy. Though my partner and I happen to have chosen to be monogamous with each other, I have several friends who are non-monogamous and committed to their partners.

What is commitment for me?

#### Commitment to my job. And commitment to my work.

There is a song by the folk group Bright Morning Star that goes, "Oh, my life is more than my work, and my work is more than my job." My job is the place I give my skills, my full


**Splendid** continues on page 5

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

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Calendar.....	7-8



### Volunteers of the Month

Gail Zacharias  
Robyn Ochs  
Deb Morley  
Wayne Bryant  
Stephanie Green  
Bhavana  
Debra  
  
Katrina  
Cathy DeLuca

And many more  
fabulous people!  
You know who  
you are!

*BiWomen* is published bi-monthly.

**Editor:**

Ellyn Ruthstrom

**Proofreader:**

Cathy DeLuca

**Newsletter Mailing  
Divas:**

Deb Morley

Katrina

Printed on  
recycled paper

### *Bi Means Bi: What a Surprise!*

So my bisexual gossip of the month is that Ani DiFranco is single again. In March's *OUT* magazine, she talks about divorcing her husband of four years and what her current life is like. I found a statement in the short piece about her very amusing. "Ani recalls that when the two were first married, she heard reports that her lesbian and bi following felt she'd turned her back on them." *OUT* usually is so reluctant to even identify people as bi, yet in this statement they claim that bi people were feeling something that was clearly biphobic. Why on earth would bi people feel Ani was betraying them by being with a man? They then go on to say, "They'll also be overjoyed to hear her reaffirm that she is still 'bi all the way!'" Who needs reaffirming? We know what she's identified as for over ten years—so glad you caught on, *OUT*.

So that's my little rant. But let's get back to the gossip. Ani is single. I happen to be single, too. A mere coincidence? I think not! Only joking, but I thought I'd do a little promo for next issue's theme (see the box to the right of this column) which is about popular culture. Ani is a great example of an out bi woman who has put herself out there for years in her music, her politics, and her personal life. And she's got amazing arms...I digress. No matter what the biphobic mainstream gay and lesbian press (no, that is not contradictory) chooses to propagate about her, we've always taken her at her word. We need more Anis who are out and proud to be bi. I hope you'll think about the representations in the popular culture that are meaningful to you and share your thoughts with *BiWomen* readers.

Ellyn Ruthstrom

*The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.*

### NEXT IN *BiWOMEN*

The *BiWomen* theme for  
August/September is:

### Bi Women in Popular Culture

Let's look at popular culture with our bi gaze... Is a lesbian bi when she sleeps with a man? Is a straight woman bi when she sleeps with another woman? Is she or isn't she? Is it important to have it named? And please find us a representation of a HAPPY bisexual. Famous TV bi moments? Remember CJ on *LA Law*? Others?

**Deadline: July 18, 2003**

### Future Issues in 2003

### October/November *Healing Paths*

### PLEASE SUBMIT TO *BiWOMEN* !

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,  
black-and-white art, news, and views to:

*BiWomen*

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to

NellyThrustmor@aol.com

***If you do not want your name  
published, please tell us.***

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## National Report Shows Increase in Bi Victims of Hate Crimes

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

**T**he NCAVP (National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs) recently released its report on bias-related crimes in the GLBT community in 2002. The report has a great deal of important information that various GLBT rights organizations will be able to use in their efforts to create more safety within our communities.

The Bay Area Bisexual Network (BABN) issued a press release in May to draw attention to the report and to the particularly high increase in hate crimes against bisexual victims in the San Francisco area. The 57 San Francisco Bay Area bisexual hate crimes reported in 2002 were up 235% from that recorded in 2001 and more than five times the number reported in 2000.

Within the NCAVP report, there was an alarming 58% increase nationally in

bisexual-identified victims in 2001-2002, making up 6% of all the reported anti-bias crimes. The anti-violence program in Los Angeles also noted, "There were startling increases in the number of victims who identified as bisexual [in their area] (up 600% from the previous year)."

"The numbers are horribly shocking," therapist and BABN Co-director Dr. Maggi Rubenstein declared upon hearing the report. "Whether this means out bisexuals feel more comfortable reporting hate crimes now than before because we have a vibrant Bay Area bisexual community, or if this spike is a marker for intensified violence against bisexuals, it is a wake up call for our community."

The BABN press release also noted, "The recent surge in visible numbers reflects years of work by bisexual activists outside and inside agencies and the strength of the bisexual community and movement, which provides an atmosphere of safety for bisexual people to come out and thrive."

To look over the full NCAVP report, visit [www.avp.org/publications/reports/2002NCAVPbiasrpt.pdf](http://www.avp.org/publications/reports/2002NCAVPbiasrpt.pdf). ▼

## New Brunch Coordinator

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the new brunch coordinator, so please contact her at [dgm@ias.ga.unc.edu](mailto:dgm@ias.ga.unc.edu) if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! And check out the calendar on pages 7-8 for the brunch coming up in July (June is busy with Pride activities). Hope you can join us.

## Dear BiWomen,

I really enjoyed this last issue (April/May: *Why Bi?*) because it was more serious/political. Some earlier ones this year I've barely read and I considered not renewing. Please continue discussion of serious/important/political/down-to-earth topics! And special thanks to Marcia Deihl for the piece about the anti-war event. That's really my life these days. If we can't get rid of the Mad Cowboy, we can all hang it up.

Joan Walsh

## Dear Joan,

Thanks for your note! I agree that *BiWomen* needs more political topics discussed. I welcome writers (hint, hint) to contribute these and we'll gladly print them.

Ellyn ▼



There was a great turnout for the brunch at Deborah's in Newton in March. If you are interested in hosting a brunch, contact the Brunch Coordinator, Deb Morley. (See info in sidebar above.)



## Domestic Violence Workshop

The Network/La Red, in collaboration with The Elizabeth Stone House and The Violence Recovery Program/Fenway Community Health Center, is sponsoring a day-long training for domestic violence and sexual assault advocates. The workshop, "Ending Abuse in the Lesbian, Bisexual Women's and Transgender Communities," will be held Wednesday, June 18, 2003, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., at the Holiday Inn, 500 Lincoln Street in Worcester, Massachusetts. Topics to be covered at the workshop will include immigration status, sexual identity and coming-out issues in the context of trauma, working within the provider system, and the importance of screening for batterers. For more information contact [advocate@thenetworkla.red.org](mailto:advocate@thenetworkla.red.org).

## Double Trouble: Sagittarian and Bisexual

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

I'm a Sagittarian, and some people might say that factor hinders my ability to have a committed relationship even more than being bisexual. Sagittarius is considered "the bachelor" sign because of its wide independent streak, a strong sense of sexuality (some people accuse us of being flirts...or sluts), and a tendency to get out of situations that feel confining. If those things *are* true, why would I have trouble committing to someone? Ha!

And truthfully, I don't feel I do have a problem committing to people. In fact, I feel I take my commitments much more seriously than some other people who seem to jump into romantic relationships and promise the world and then have to back step their way out, breaking those promises right and left. I try not to promise anything I can't follow through on, and when in doubt, I usually keep my mouth shut.

When I got married many moons ago (my only legally committed relationship) I did not promise to love my partner til death do us part. We had a civil ceremony that didn't have all that religious stuff in it. Our personal agreement was to stay together for as long as we both were happy—and that to me was a very serious commitment. When we did end our marriage we were both deeply unhappy.

This is the thing about ending a committed relationship: you don't leave after one day of "unhappiness," or just a bad week or a sporadically bad month. If you've made a commitment to someone, you try to stay to work on things through the bad times. I've joked with friends about the ends of relationships and how the key question seems to be "How low will you go?" And when you've hit it you know you need to get out and move on. And that is a good thing.

And that's one of the reasons I don't agree with the usual mainstream bemoaning of a high divorce rate (which only reflects straight legal relationships anyway). On the other hand, I do bemoan the high marriage rate and how much money

is spent on weddings—but that's another issue. The average person in this country now lives into her/his 70s or 80s. Do you honestly feel a person who lives that long should only have one long-term committed relationship during their lifetime? Of course you don't—most of you reading this are bisexual and think this idea preposterous. But that's what I hear when "they" say how horrible it is that the divorce rate is so high.

I don't have anything against a lifetime commitment—when it works for people it's wonderful—however, it is just one possible way of going through life. It's no better or worse than serial monogamy, polyamory, celibacy, promiscuity, and the myriad other ways we humans experience each other.

I know the very important question of children arises for many people in this discussion. And please don't think that I want people to think only about themselves and their own needs—when the parents of children decide to change their own relationship it will, of course, affect the whole family. But I also think that modeling a healthy choice to end a relationship for children will help them deal with their own relationships as they mature.

My experience in the bi community is that we have been at the forefront of figuring out many different ways of being committed to the loved ones in our lives. Not that we do it better than other people, but I really respect the honesty and directness of many bi people I've known over the years who have worked on being true to themselves as well as being true to their loved ones. It's not painless but it's real.

I know that speaks to my own heart etiquette as well. I rely on that other Sadge attribute to help guide me through my romances—honesty. And *that* I am truly committed to. ▽

*Want to write for BiWomen? Send your submissions to [NellyThrustmor@aol.com](mailto:NellyThrustmor@aol.com).*



## Splendid from page 1

attention and twenty-five (or more) hours of my time each week, the place from which I obtain my health insurance and a regular (if not large) paycheck. My work, on the other hand, is much broader. It is the work I do to make the world a better place: teaching at Tufts, speaking at conferences and colleges around the country, writing, putting out the *Bisexual Resource Guide*, supporting and encouraging other activists. So here I'll add:

### Commitment to activism

I have made a lifelong commitment to be an activist. The focus of my activism may (and does) change, but I will be out there, for as long as I am able, trying to make this world a better and safer place. Whether my focus is ending homophobia and biphobia, recycling, sustainability, ending violence against women, children, and other people—I'll be out there doing *something*. I'll give my time and my money, I'll write letters, send e-mails, and make phone calls. My elected representatives hear from me often.

### Commitment to my friends and loved ones

I try to remember to keep in touch with the important people in my life, to listen to them when they need a sympathetic ear, to laugh and play with them, to remember to appreciate them and let them know how important they are to me.

### Commitment to myself

This one is super-important. If I don't take good care of myself, I will be no good to anyone else. I promise myself that I will exercise, eat (moderately) well, get enough sleep, take time for myself and my partner, and time to be alone.

Visit BBWN online at:  
**[biresource.org/bbwn](http://biresource.org/bbwn)**  
for a calendar listing of  
local bisexual events.

### Commitment to my relationship

And last, but not least, commitment to my relationship is, of course, very important to me. I have made a decision to make Peg, my partner, the primary person in my life. We live together, share expenses, take care of one another, do the household tasks that the other most dislikes, try to remember to be kind toward one another. We have made a commitment to be there for each other in so many different ways.

Yes, this bisexual CAN commit herself. And not *only* to her relationship. ▽

### Recovery from page 1

Most of all, I have found my own voice through this process. The voice that was hidden underneath so much fear, and that I tried to keep buried with my eating disorder. Well, I don't want to fear my feelings anymore, and I don't want to ignore what's going on inside me. By committing to recovery, I've found the strength I need to fight this thing, to get to know myself, and to finally ask others for help. I realize now that I didn't just commit to my recovery, but I committed to me—to taking care of me by being true to myself. And that is the gift of my eating disorder. ▽

## Theater Offensive Wants YOU!

The Theater Offensive—Boston's queer theater company—is looking for responsible people of all colors and ages for a street team and events team, weeknights and/or weekends now through June 20. No experience necessary. Outgoing, social, schmoozy or just interested-in-meeting folks a plus but not required (shy folks welcome)! Connections in GLBT and Black/Latino/Asian communities, experience with targeted street promotion, and/or access to a car are also a huge plus! Contact Amatul Hannan at 617-621-6090 or [amatul@thetheateroffensive.org](mailto:amatul@thetheateroffensive.org). Also looking for ushers and concessions/box office folks. Call Charles Baldwin at 617-879-2147 or [cbaldwin@wheelock.edu](mailto:cbaldwin@wheelock.edu).



Lynn hosted the February brunch where these fine women showed up—and some of them played in the snow afterwards!



## North American Conference on Bisexuality

San Diego is the site for the 2nd Annual North American Conference on Bisexuality, August 21-24, 2003. There will be three days of interactive workshops, discussions, parties and entertainment. Conference tracks will include: Activism & Bi Organizing; Gender, Health; Media & Culture; Relationships & Family; Sexuality; Bi Research & Theory; and Spirituality & Personal Growth. The Radisson Hotel in San Diego is offering a special \$99 per room rate for up to 4 in a room. If you are interested in presenting at the conference contact Alexei Guren@msn.com. For other conference information contact Alexei or Luigi Ferrer, lferrer@bisexual.org, 305-669-3031 or visit [www.bisexual.org/events](http://www.bisexual.org/events).

## Bisexual Women in Cyberspace: A Review of the Web site AfterEllen.com

By Lynne Levine

I love popular culture—film and TV—and have been paying close attention to LGBT imagery within it for years. I was therefore delighted to discover a Web site that discusses television and movies in a bi-positive way. I highly recommend the Web site AfterEllen.com. Currently there is an article there which discusses a movie scheduled to be released sometime this summer, starring Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck, in which Affleck once again plays the straight guy who beds the so-called lesbian. (Remember *Chasing Amy*?) The whole “lesbians who sleep with men” phenomenon is one of my pet-peeves so I was delighted that the reviewer shares my sentiment. Here is one of my favorite quotes from this article: “**We need more films that explore bisexuality in an honest and thoughtful manner**, but not films like these that use bisexuality as just another obstacle for the male lead to overcome in his quest to Get The Girl—and then call it “lesbianism” on top of it.” [their emphasis] (See [www.AfterEllen.com/Movies/gigli.html](http://www.AfterEllen.com/Movies/gigli.html).)

But that’s just one of the articles at this Web site exploring the topic of bisexual women in film and TV. There are several articles specifically devoted to bisexual women, and other articles at this site that are also inclusive of bi women in their discussions of the subject matter. For example, the page containing a timeline of lesbian and bi primary characters on television ([www.AfterEllen.com/TV/Timeline-TV.html](http://www.AfterEllen.com/TV/Timeline-TV.html)) provides an asterisk next to the names of all the bisexual women characters. But don’t just take my word for it—*check it out!* ▼

And stay tuned for the next issue of *BiWomen* where we’ll be exploring the theme of “Bi Women in Popular Culture.” Send in your observations!

## Happy Birthday, Chiltern Mountain Club!

New England’s premier GLBT outdoor activities club turns 25 this year. Ten people participated in Chiltern’s founding event in 1978 and today the organization has over 1,000 members in the region (about two-thirds men and one-third women). July 11-13 there will be a special 25th Anniversary Jamboree in Gunstock, New Hampshire. Dues are \$20 per year (\$25 for couples) and you receive a monthly membership newsletter with information about upcoming events. Visit [www.chiltern.org](http://www.chiltern.org) for more information or to join online. ▼



NEW ENGLAND  
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Saturday July 19th, 2003

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(across from the Boston Park Plaza Hotel)

130 Columbus Ave., Boston

That's right, we had such a great time at the new location back in January that we decided to move the Summer Flea to here as well.

## VENDING HOURS

Saturday 11am to 6pm

The Fetish Fair Fleamarket™ is brought to you by the New England Leather Alliance (NELA).

For more information, check out our home page at [www.nla-newengland.org](http://www.nla-newengland.org) or call (617) 876-NELA.

(You must be 18 years of age or older. No children or infants permitted.)



## CALENDAR *continued from page 8*

Chinatown. On Beach Street between Harrison and Washington. Nearest T stop is Chinatown on the Orange Line. We will be joined by bisexual and bi-friendly people from the the Unitarian/Universalist General Assembly, which is meeting in Boston this weekend. **Note:** Buddha's Delight has returned to its original ground-floor location.

### June 23 ♦ Monday

**Mixed Gender Poly Support Group**, 6:30-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. This group is intended as a supportive environment to talk about poly-related issues in your life, to ask questions, or just to hear what other people have to say.

### July 1 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Talking About Sex With Your Partner(s): Setting Limits, Negotiating Safer Sex, Etc." See June 3rd.

### July 2 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual**, 7-8:45 p.m. See June 4th.

### July 7 ♦ Monday

**Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group**, 7-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. See June 2nd.

### July 8 ♦ Tuesday

**Queer Married Women's Discussion Group**, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. See June 10th.

### July 9 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting**, 6:30-8:30 p.m. See June 11th.

### July 13 ♦ Sunday

**BBWN Brunch** at Deb's in Cambridge, Noon. Please bring the usual potluck dish and drinks to share. If it's a nice day, we'll take a walk around Fresh Pond. Call Deb at 617-945-0621 or e-mail her at debmo345@attbi.com to let her know you'll be attending.

### July 15 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Men in Our Lives." See June 3rd.

### July 17 ♦ Thursday

**Coming Out as Bisexual**, 7-9 p.m. See June 4th.

### July 18 ♦ Friday

**BiWomen Submissions Deadline.** This issue's theme is "Bi Women in Popular Culture." See page 2 for more ideas. Send submissions to: *BiWomen*, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA, 02140 or e-mail to nellythrustmor@aol.com.

### July 19 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Brunch**, 11:30 a.m. A favorite brunch

spot, Johnny D's on Holland Street in Davis Square in Somerville always draws the biggest bi brunch crowd. The Davis stop on the Red Line is just across the street.

### July 27 ♦ Sunday

**Sunday Bi Brunch**, 1 p.m. Our last trip to Veggie Planet was a big hit, so we're going back. 47 Palmer Street (at Club Passim) in Harvard Sq., Cambridge. As the name suggests, it's vegetarian food. T stop is Harvard on the Red Line.

### July 28 ♦ Monday

**Mixed Gender Poly Support Group**, 6:30-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. See June 23rd.

### July 29 ♦ Tuesday

**BiWomen mailing**, 7-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center. Can you say label, stuff, and seal? Join us. Socialize during and after.

### PLAN AHEAD:

This year's BiCamp will begin Thursday, August 28th and run through Monday, September 1st (Labor Day).

BiCamp is a weekend camping trip in the Northampton area for bisexual and bi-friendly people. For more information, see the enclosed flier or e-mail BiCamp@tdint.com.



## Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

### Ongoing Events

#### Mondays:

**Gendertalk**, 6:30-8:00 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

#### Women's Club Nights

**Saturdays:** Hollywood KTV, 41 Essex Street, Chinatown T, Boston. 10 p.m.-2 a.m. \$10 cover. Every third Saturday is Glitter Switch: Drag/Karaoke.

**Sundays:** Candyland Queer night, 9 p.m.-1 a.m., the Milky Way, 403 Centre St, Jamaica Plain. DJ and dance floor.

**Thursdays:** Dyke Night at the Midway Cafe, 3496 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain. Pool table 8-10, DJ with dancing 10-2.

## BiWomen wants you!!!



NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

### SUBSCRIPTION RATE

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BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140



## The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

## Ongoing Events

### 1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

**Bi Women's Rap**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

### 2nd Tuesdays:

**Married Bi Women's Discussion Group**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

### Every Thursday:

**Queer Jewish Women Under 30**, 7:00-8:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

# CALENDAR

## June 2 ♦ Monday

**Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group**, 7-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Room 319, Boston. The group discusses issues relevant to women in the poly community, especially those of interest to queer women. It ranges from social chatting to more in-depth discussions, depending on what people want to talk about each month. All self-identified women are welcome! Questions to Rosa at rcarson@wso.williams.edu.

## June 3 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Topic: "First Female Love." Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

## June 4 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual**, 7-8:45 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

## June 8 ♦ Sunday

**Women's Tea Dance for PRIDE**, 4-10 p.m. Kitty Pride Tea Dance promoted by Purrr Promotions for Bisexual Women and Lesbians at Vertigo. \$10 cover, 21+, DJ Dee. Vertigo Nightclub and Lounge, 126 State St., Boston, 617-723-7277, www.vertigoboston.com.

## June 10 ♦ Tuesday

**Queer Married Women's Discussion Group**, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center,

46 Pleasant St. The group is facilitated by Denise Garrow-Pruitt who can be contacted at dgarrow@rcn.com. Call 617-354-8807 for directions.

## June 11 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting**, 6:30-8:30 p.m. All bi community members welcome to attend. The meeting is at 29 Stanhope St., 4th floor in Back Bay.

## June 14 ♦ Saturday

**BOSTON PRIDE!!!** Come out to Copley Square and join other bis from Boston and New England as we march through the streets of the city to Boston Common. (Meet at 11:30 in front of the Community Church, 565 Boylston St. No brunch this year but still a good meeting spot.) Then stop by the fabulous Bisexual Resource Center booth and check out their wares (and the cute bis who will sell them to you, too!)

**Pride Concert & Dance**, 8-9 p.m. Sons of Italy, 117 Swanton St. Winchester. Concert: Featuring singer/songwriter Erica Wheeler, followed by dancing with DJ Dee until midnight. \$10.00 cover. Info: 781-648-0722, dee@djdee.com.

## June 17 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Polyamory: Having Multiple Relationships With the Knowledge and Consent of Your Partner." See June 3rd.

## June 19 ♦ Thursday

**Coming Out as Bisexual**, 7-9 p.m. June 4th.

## June 21 ♦ Saturday

**Safer Sex Educator Volunteer Training**, at Northeastern University, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Train to be a volunteer safer sex educator for Fenway Community Health. Do outreach in bars, clubs, and coffeehouses about HIV, STDs, and safer sex. Make a difference, have fun, meet new friends, and help fight the spread of HIV. Space is limited. E-mail Marshall at mmiller@fenwayhealth.org or call 617-927-6032 for more information and how to register.

**Saturday Bi Brunch**, 11:30 a.m. Brunch will be at Doyle's at 3484 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain, between the Green Street and Forest Hills stops on the Orange Line. The number at Doyle's is 617-524-2345.

## June 29 ♦ Sunday

**Sunday Bi Brunch**, 1 p.m. Enjoy delicious vegetarian food at Buddha's Delight in Boston's

## Support BBWN with Your Used Books, CDs, VHS tapes, and DVDs!

Long-time member Gail Zacharias is helping BBWN with fundraising by listing the used books, etc on various online channels. 40% of the sale price will be donated to BBWN. If you have books to donate, please bring them to the BRC office, or contact Robyn (ochs@bi.org, 617-413-2717) to arrange for book transfer.

The books must be in reasonably good shape—in particular, all pages must be present and readable (some highlighting and underlining is ok if it doesn't obscure the text), and the cover must be present and firmly attached to the pages (it's ok for the dust jacket of a hardcover to be missing). And the books mustn't be smelly (e.g. musty or smoky), since Gail will be storing them in her home!

**CALENDAR** continues on page 7



## Bi Women in Popular Culture

### Bi Visibility on Screen: Four Recent Films

By Sarah Rowley

Four recent films show both the slowly increasing visibility of and the persistent limits on bisexual women characters. All four are based on books (two novels, a memoir and a biography), and their adaptations show interesting attitudes toward bisexuality.

Neil LaBute's 2002 *Possession* is based on A.S. Byatt's book of the same name, winner of the prestigious Booker Prize in 1990. In the book, academics Maud and Roland fall in love as they slowly discover that their respective subjects—two Victorian poets—had carried on a torrid secret affair.

*Possession* the book is a far better novel than *Possession* the movie is a film, but the movie is considerably less biphobic. Significantly, while bisexuality is central to the plot of both, only the film actually uses the word. When Maud first discusses the idea that noted lesbian Christabel La Motte might have had an affair with a married man, she says, "Of course, she could have been bisexual," thereby naming one of the movie's central revelations.

The movie also cuts Leonora Stern, a prominent bisexual character (and very stereotypical one at that) in the novel. Sluttish and overbearing, Leonora writes torrid feminist theory (lush with suggestive adjectives) and overreads lesbian symbols into Christabel's poetry. After spending most of the novel in pursuit of Maud, she ends by capturing the elderly James Blackadder. Her garish wardrobe (consisting of mostly an overabundance of clashing ethnic items) and voracious sexuality are presented as equally tacky. In fact, everything about Leonora is excessive, and her bisexuality is a marker of excess.

Without Leonora, the film's one bi woman is Christabel herself, a strong, intelligent, and sympathetic figure. The book makes her literary talent and intellect as clear as her passion, but the film cuts most of the writing that reveals her character. Unfortunately, the historical portions of the plot

Screen continues on page 4



Tina Modotti (Ashley Judd) and Frida Kahlo (Salma Hayek) dancing the tango in *Frida*.

### The Bi Gaze: A Different Queer Eye

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

Similar to gay and lesbian TV viewers, bi TV viewers are constantly trying to find ourselves depicted within the larger cultural representations. Fortunately, there are now a great number of gay and lesbian characters on prime time sitcoms, dramas, and reality shows and I think this proliferation is helpful to all queer people in the acceptance of same sex relationships. Unfortunately, there is still a dearth of representations of realistic bi characters, especially any who actually claim out loud the identity of bisexual. My own favorite TV bi women over the years have been CJ on *LA Law* played by the delicious Amanda Donohoe, the quirky Nancy played by Sandra Bernhard on *Roseanne*, and Michael Michele's brainy and gorgeous Det. Rene Sheppard on *Homicide*—one of the best (and sorely missed) TV police dramas ever. But these have been few and far between and rarely do these characters get to discuss what a bi identity means to them.

Gaze continues on page 7

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## Volunteers of the Month

---

Gail Zacharias

Robyn Ochs

Deb Morley

Wayne Bryant

Sarah Rowley

Linda H.

Marcia Diehl

Katrina

Angie Hockman

---

And many more  
fabulous people!  
You know who  
you are!

*BiWomen* is published bi-monthly.

**Editor:**

Ellyn Ruthstrom

**Printed on  
recycled paper**

*The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.*

## More Bis This Season

If you missed Angelina Jolie on *20/20* a few weeks ago, don't be dismayed, there really are going to be other bis on TV in the not too distant future.

NBC is heavily promoting its new sitcom called "Coupling" which seems to be a half hour version of a mixed gender "Sex in the City." It's a remake of a British sitcom that was very successful there so, as usual, the Americans want to try to do one of their own. So one of the characters on the show is an Asian-American bi woman. Though there are some reports that her sexuality (in the British version) is very often just used to keep the dialogue sexually-charged, we can wait and hope that the writers will try to explore her character more in depth. Oops, I forgot, we're talking about a sitcom here. OK, so it's a long shot but let's keep an eye out anyway.

The other major bi character who is creating a buzz right now is the character of Lena on *All My Children*. The lesbian character of Bianca was recently raped by her girlfriend Lena's deranged ex-boyfriend. There has been quite an uproar in the GLBT media watch circles about this storyline. Bianca is the first major lesbian character on a soap opera and the first to have a same sex kiss on a soap as well. Many are asking why have that character raped? I don't watch AMC so I really don't feel I can comment precisely about the way they are doing anything, yet it seems to me a lot of interesting things could be dealt with from this scenario. And I think it could be challenging if they really focus on both Bianca and Lena and the affects of this horrible incident on them as individuals and their relationship. If anyone is a soap watcher, feel free to write in about it.

BBWN is celebrating 21 years of being an organization this year. Want to come out and celebrate with us, meet other bi women, and imagine what a bi-positive world would look like? We are planning a bi women's gathering for October or November 2003 so stay tuned for details in the next issue of *BiWomen*.

Ellyn Ruthstrom

## NEXT IN *BiWOMEN*

The *BiWomen* theme for  
October/November is:

### Healing Paths

What have you been learning along your healing journey? What methods have you used along the way? How has your sexuality been a part of this journey? Can bisexuality help heal? How?

**Deadline:** September 19, 2003

## Future Issues

**December/January**  
*Traveling Bi*

## PLEASE SUBMIT TO *BiWOMEN* !

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, black-and-white art, news, and views to:

*BiWomen*

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to

NellyThrustmor@aol.com

**If you do not want your name  
published, please tell us.**

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this newsletter are copyrighted  
by the authors and artists.



## BBWN Financial Statement 1/1-03 through 6/30/03

Balance forward 1/1/03:	\$ 2063.70	Income	
Expenses		Dues	\$ 665.00
Printing	911.99	Merchandise	398.06
Postal fees & postage	190.80	Bank Interest	4.06
Supplies	27.77	Donations	175.00
Merchandise purchased	0	Event income	0
Event expenses	71.50	Advertising	50.00
Total expenses	\$ 1202.06	Book project income	227.98
		Total income:	\$1520.10
		Balance as of 6/30/03	\$ 2381.74

### Hey, Bi Women,

Congratulations! Thanks to the book project (don't forget: we want YOUR used books--see page 12 for details) and two donations, we have a positive net income for the first half of 2003. Let's keep up this pattern, and keep BBWN on a sound financial footing. Please make a donation to BBWN.

Remember, BBWN is important! Turning 21 this coming September, we are the oldest bi women's group in the world, and *BiWomen* is the second oldest continuous bi publication in the world (after *Bi Nieuws* in the Netherlands). We have no paid staff, and no regular sources of income. We have a

longstanding policy of making *BiWomen* available to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay, and the newsletter is given away at conferences and other public venues. For many women, *BiWomen* is their first affirmation of bisexuality.

Checks can be sent to BBWN or, if you wish your donation to be tax deductible, you may channel it through our parent organization, BRC (both groups: PO Box 400639, Cambridge MA 02140)—be sure to put "for BBWN in the comment line."

Submitted by Robyn Ochs, Treasurer for BBWN since 1989

### Brunch Coordinator Wants You to Host!

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the brunch coordinator, so please contact her at [dgm@ias.ga.unc.edu](mailto:dgm@ias.ga.unc.edu) if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! And check out the calendar on pages 11-12 for the brunches coming up in August and September. Hope you can join us.

## Where Were the Bisexuals at Pride?

Oh, we were there, but without BBWN's annual Pre-Pride brunch to gather people together and get psyched for the march, many bis couldn't find each other so there was no visible bi contingent. This was very disappointing to many people. It certainly showed how important the annual brunch is to the bi community's celebration of Pride. Let's hope some people come forward next year to revive the tradition and kick-off the day the bi way!

The BRC had its usual fabulous booth (kudos to Sheeri Kritzer booth organizer extraordinaire) where hundreds stopped by for info, copies

of *BiWomen* and safer sex supplies from Bi Health.



(Left) BBWN member Debbie Block-Schwent with partner Kevin Block-Schwenk enjoying the sunny Common early in the day. (Above) BBWN members Deb Morley and [redacted] schmoozing behind the BRC Booth.



## Music by Bisexual Artists Sought

Bi songwriter and musician Skott Freedman is seeking submissions for "Bi the People: A Compilation of Bisexual Artists & Friends." The CD will be distributed in mainstream and LGBT bookstores and record stores. Proceeds will benefit The Bisexual Foundation, a national nonprofit based in San Diego, California. Send an audio recording with at least three tracks and press material to: VY Records, Attn: Scott Freedman, P.O. Box 266, Charleston, SC 29402-0266.

## Screen from page 1

translate less well to the screen than the contemporary ones, and Jennifer Ehle, the talented actress who plays Christabel, is given little to do but smile enigmatically.

Christabel's partner Blanche, driven to suicide by her lover's betrayal, is treated more sympathetically on screen than in the novel, perhaps because her anguish becomes visible. But both Blanche and Christabel are overshadowed by Maud, played with great skill by Gwyneth Paltrow. She becomes the central character, and her romance with a more macho Roland than appears in the book provides closure to a film split between two centuries.

*Iris* (2001) also cuts back and forth between past and present—the youth and old age of acclaimed British novelist and philosopher Iris Murdoch and her husband John Bayley. Based on Bayley's bestselling memoir, the film shows the effect on both partners of Iris's losing battle with Alzheimer's. The film acknowledges Murdoch's affairs with both men and women without ever using the b-word.

Despite its title, *Iris* is clearly the story of a marriage rather than a woman. Split between scenes of the courtship between the young Iris and John and later as their elderly selves, the film focuses on their relationship. It's clear that John was never a match for Iris's brilliance, and spent most of his life as an enthusiastic cheerleader who trailed in her shadow and tolerated her affairs as well as he could. As Iris gradually loses her mind, her disease both reverses their roles—putting John in control—and exacerbates his sense that she had always been beyond his reach, beloved but unknowable.

This tension gives the film its emotional center. The marvelous acting of Judi Dench and Jim Broadbent, both of whom received Oscar nominations for their work (he won), creates a deeply felt portrayal of the effects of Alzheimer's, and gives the movie power and depth. But grounding the film in the marriage inevitably diminishes Iris. We know that Iris has accomplished great things, but see her primarily in relation to John—outshining him, rather than shining for herself. It also consider-

ably downplays her affairs; the real Murdoch had literally hundreds of lovers, and while she sometimes confessed doubts about her frenzied need to be constantly in love, her passionate life had great influence on her philosophy. We see two of the women Iris sleeps with—a young butch lesbian in college and longtime friend and lover Janet—but the story pays more attention to John and the men who cause him jealousy.

Moreover, the film focuses on the unraveling of Iris's formidable intelligence—the humiliation of a woman whose mind was

everything to her as she loses it. Given that the young brilliant Iris can be unsympathetic, her painful disease almost seems a comeuppance. Is Iris being punished for her success as an intellectual woman, for her bisexuality, for her many affairs, for overshadowing a man? We are left to wonder.

There are obvious analogies between *Iris* and *Frida* (2002), which is also based on the real life of a talented and famous bi woman. A screen biography of Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, the film makes her relationship with husband Diego



The young Iris Murdoch is played by Kate Winslet in the film *Iris*.

Rivera central by beginning with their first meeting. But perhaps because the film was Salma Hayek's personal pet project (as producer and starring as Frida herself), Frida has more of a presence in her own right. Her relationship with her family, her disabled body, and her art also take up time on screen, and her paintings provide the style that colors the film, especially in a number of magical realist scenes.

Frida's life is filled with physical pain, stemming from a catastrophic trolley wreck that severely injured her as a young woman. (The film makes no mention of her childhood polio.) She endures terrible health, a miscarriage, and a beating by the police, but nothing compares with the torment caused by Diego's constant womanizing, which creates even more emotional turmoil.

Frida of course has her own affairs, and the film overflows with gorgeous sexuality. But while she has two significant female friendships (both with women that Diego sleeps with) her three shown affairs with women are presented as purely sexual. By



contrast, the more important of her more numerous affairs with men—those with Diego and the exiled Leon Trotsky—provide deep emotional, intellectual, and artistic connections. Yet this is a film in which there are no happy different-sex pairings; all romantic relationships between men and women (including every marriage in Frida's family) are marked by betrayal, sadness, or violence.

Director Julie Taymor and Hayek have created a world of rare vibrancy, and the tragic elements of the film never overwhelm its sheer beauty. From start to end, *Frida* is full of color, motion, and music, inspired by Frida's art and passion. This strong aesthetic vision makes the turbulence of Frida's life look appealing. Or, to paraphrase Ani DiFranco, Frida's 'excessive' sexuality may keep her from ever being happy, but it sure doesn't stop her from having fun.

Hayek's *Frida* has some of the same energy and appeal of *Karmen Gei*, the eponymous heroine of the 2001 film by director Joseph Gai Ramaka. The character of Carmen has had a long life, from Prosper Mérimée's nineteenth-century novel to Georges Bizet's opera to 52 previous film adaptations. Ramaka clearly draws on the opera but gives her story a very different cast by transposing it to his native Senegal.

Carmen, of course, is a significant figure in a long line of exotic, immoral Roma\* in

European literature—one manifestation of the prejudice that led to the mass murder of 1.5 million Roma in the Holocaust, and that underlies the continuing abuses of this community today. In Romania in 1999, a politician proposed on national television that all Romany be rounded up and expelled from the country. In the past six months journalists have uncovered evidence that doctors in several Eastern European countries have been sterilizing young Roma women without their consent. Ramaka, himself an immigrant to France, seems to have great sympathy for a woman cast as a racial "other." He presents a much more likable version of the heroine, while retaining her role as a female force of chaos.

The film opens in a seaside women's prison that looks much like a slave castle on the West African coast. There, in front of a cheering crowd, the imprisoned Karmen turns a traditional dance into a skilled seduction of Angelique, the prison governor, that allows her to escape. Her escape dramatizes Carmen's famous motto from the opera—love and freedom—and her ability to disrupt the political order with her body.

She uses these same skills to crash the wedding of soldier Lamine Diop and the upperclass woman Majiguene, accusing their prominent families of plundering the country. This scene gives a political edge to the affair between Karmen and Lamine—but unlike the opera, where their disastrous love is the focus, the film puts this bisexual woman squarely at the center of her own story. We meet not his mother but hers—the wonderfully blunt, wheelchair-bound Ma Penda—and follow her through her adventures as the leader of a gang of smugglers and several lovers, none of whom is her equal.

Karmen is an overpowering presence in a film full of strong women; Majiguene is not afraid to challenge her rival or tell Lamine off, and Karmen's rowdy gang of female followers sing exuberant songs about her sexual prowess as they perform traditional rituals in prison.

The film shares with *Frida* a spirit of exuberance and a strong sensual appeal. Traditional music and dance play a vital role: in one memorable scene Karmen's family and friends drive the police out of Ma Penda's restaurant by singing. A few of the songs in fact translate the lyrics of some of the opera's arias, though the music and performance are entirely West African. The sheer energy with which Djeinaba Diop Gai plays the title character counterbalances a sense of sadness, that her thirst for love and freedom can never be satisfied.

Screen continues on page 6

## Trans Human Resource Policies Studied

Research is being conducted at Northeastern University about trans policies in human resource departments of American companies and organizations. Interviews of human resource personnel or transgender employees are being sought.

Interviews would last about 30 minutes and study results will maintain confidentiality of interviewees and companies involved. Contact Jill Weiss, Northeastern University Law, Policy & Society Program, 617-373-4676. You can check out the dissertation proposal at [hometown.aol.com/jtweissny](http://hometown.aol.com/jtweissny).

It's crucial to have bi role models in popular culture because bis are misunderstood perhaps more than gays and lesbians...and people are getting used to seeing gay characters on TV now. It almost seems like they're trying to be pc by putting the token gay person on the sitcoms...so why not a bi? And it's always good to have as much visibility as possible. We need to let the public know that sexuality is fluid and not black and white (all gay or all straight), and since most people are so hooked into the media this is a good way to get the word out that there are a lot of bis out there. I hope we will be portrayed accurately and not have the stereotypes reinforced!

—Melissa K.



## Transcending Boundaries 2003

October 24-26 the third annual Transcending Boundaries conference will take place on the campus of UMASS/Amherst. Linking the bi, trans and intersex communities, the conference will have an array of workshops, keynote speakers, opportunities to socialize and have fun! Registration is \$45 before September 20, \$55 after that. Contact Alice at 860-956-9299 or Lisa at [r27@attbi.com](mailto:r27@attbi.com) for more information.

## Screen from page 5

Karmen's bisexuality is Ramaka's addition to the story—evidently how he conceived of a black Carmen at the onset of the twenty-first century. It seems clearly part of her anarchic spirit, and the desire for freedom that makes her both a compelling human being and an expression of some of the contradictory forces alive in Africa today. One wonders where this leaves Ramaka's political vision when at the film's end Lamine murders her brutally.

Despite their variety in setting, when it comes to bisexuality these films have more similarities than differences. On the bright side, none of them are serial killers; the audience is clearly meant to sympathize with all of these characters. But other more troubling themes recur.

All are artists: Frida a famous painter, Iris an intellectual novelist, Christabel a poet, and Karmen a dancer and singer whose true art is creating chaos. All fulfill sexual stereotypes: Iris, Frida, and Karmen fit the familiar promiscuous mold, and Christabel betrays her partner for a lover of a different sex. In all of the films, relationships with men clearly overshadow and outnumber relationships with women (with the possible exception of Angelique, the only lover for whom Karmen demonstrates deep feeling).

Even more importantly, none of these women has a particularly happy life to show us on screen: Frida is tortured by a hideous accident and her husband's infidelities. Iris loses her formidable intellect to the humiliating onslaught of Alzheimer's. Christabel not only loses her male lover and her illegitimate child, but also inspires her female partner's suicide—as does Karmen. These women wreak havoc on their own lives and their loved ones.

And death comes for every one of them. Karmen, who has the happiest life, dies violently for insisting on sexual freedom. Iris and Frida die from diseases that first ravage their bodies and minds. Christabel is long dead by the time the action of *Possession* opens and lives only in flashbacks. The two women lovers who are given screen time both drown themselves. Only Frida's death—in which one of her paintings bursts into flame to suggest the escape of her soul through cremation—can be seen as uplifting.

Of course, most stories require conflict, and on the screen misery can often be quite compelling. But the heterosexual Maud gets a happy ending in *Possession*. Film history is crowded with much-suffering

outcasts and underdogs who triumph in the end. The bisexuals in these movies don't overcome; they are crushed by their surroundings, their actions, or their own bodies.

Which is not to say that their stories don't have meaning, or that some of them are not excellent films. Frida Kahlo and Iris Murdoch were real women. Both did have turbulent love lives and struggled with debilitating illnesses. But does a bi woman only become filmable when her story has a suitably sad end? Is the only acceptable image of female bisexuality a brilliant promiscuous tormented artist who dies painfully?

The problem is the lack of bi women characters that don't fit these tropes. We need a wider array of bisexual images to reflect the true variety of our lives, and to counterbalance pernicious bigotry. We deserve hope and happy endings. And while all of these films make important advances, they show that on screen bi women are still locked into the straitjacket of stereotype.

What these films portray is only part of the story; the question of what these movies mean to us as the audience remains. How do we react to these portraits? Can we see ourselves in them, and can we imagine other possibilities? Do we absorb and carry the lessons of punishment, the rule that bisexuality exists but cannot be named? Or can we selectively choose the images we want and need—the life and fire in Frida and Karmen, Christabel and Iris—and draw on them to suit our own ends?

\* Roma refers to the community and culture often termed by others as Gypsies. The word Gypsy was imposed upon the Roma community and is not used to describe themselves. ▼



Kit and Trish at Pride Day 2003, Boston



## Gaze from page 1

As an aside, I know there are some shows that I don't watch that have had recent bi women characters on them—*Buffy*, *Dark Angel*, and I think some other WB or Fox shows—I can't really comment on these. I had hoped someone who does watch these would write about them and I encourage anyone who knows these shows to please submit something for a future issue.

The fact that there have been very few self-proclaimed bi women characters doesn't mean there has been a shortage of bi moments. Hitherto straight female characters—both lead and supporting—have been having same sex kisses on mainstream TV for the past 10 years or so. From *Roseanne* to *Ally McBeal*, from *Picket Fences* to *Friends*. Mind you, more often than not the characters only "experiment" with a same sex dalliance and then return to straightdom feeling like they've given it their best shot at being wild and crazy and open-minded. They are secure in their heterosexuality because they've tried "the other." (I can't think of any straight male characters where this has been attempted, can you?)

I characterize these moments as bi moments but they are not bi characters. (Just as woman to woman sexual encounters seem to always be termed "lesbian" but often at least one of the women is bi.) I actually think a lot of these moments are doing more damage to the image of bis than they are doing good. I think they fuel the distrust and animosity that gays and lesbians have towards bis and they give straight audiences a false sense of being progressive because they are not authentic representations of queerness.

To a gay or lesbian viewer these characters are the specter of the much-maligned bi-curious person who needs some excitement in her/his life before running back to the safety of straightville. It's easy to put their anger and resentment of failed relationships into a biphobic response. (Because, of course, a lesbian or gay person has never dumped a bi person, right?)

In the most recent issue of *OUT*, Chelsey Johnson claims that the fact that Jennifer Lopez's character in *Gigli* is a lesbian at the beginning of the movie (she wasn't sure if this fact made it into the final cut of the film) but later falls for the Ben Affleck character is an example of erasing lesbians. Now I don't usually like commenting on a movie without having seen it—and I really have no desire to see *Gigli*—but I found the irony of Johnson's diatribe against Hollywood's attempt to make lesbians invisible just too much to leave untouched. She uses as another example of this erasure an earlier Affleck film, *Chasing Amy*. I'm

not a huge fan of this film but it can very easily be argued that Amy is a bi character figuring out what her sexuality is. I would like to find a single lesbian who can't tell you a story about someone they know who used to date women and now dates or is partnered with a man. This isn't fiction and it isn't erasure of lesbians, it's real life, it's our life. Bi women aren't failed lesbians and we have a right to our own stories, too. And, really we have a right to better stories than *Chasing Amy* and *Gigli*!! Who is erasing whom?

I am completely aware of the fact that lesbian viewers do not have a lot to choose from. And therein lies one of the dilemmas. A lesbian viewer is going to be looking for a realistic, well-developed lesbian character who not only is open about her identity but also remains constant in that identity throughout the storyline. A bi viewer can envision all sorts of realistic scenarios for a woman character that might not be as satisfying for a lesbian viewer.

A woman could be committed to a man, fall in love with a woman but decide to stay with the man. A woman could be committed to a woman, fall in love with a man, then fall in love with a woman, then decide to go live on an island alone and say to hell with them all. A woman could be committed to a man, fall in

## Noho Film Festival

The 9th Annual Northampton Independent Film Festival is being held November 5-10, 2003 and the festival organizers are now accepting shorts and full length films and videos. Categories include: narrative, documentary, GLBT, animation, foreign, and student works. Entry deadline is September 1, 2003. For submissions and application information visit [www.niff.org](http://www.niff.org)

Gaze continues on page 10

A recent celebrity bi moment was on July 11th when 20/20 aired its interview of Angelina Jolie by Barbara Walters. Walters mentioned Jolie's relationship that Jolie had with Jenny Shimizu and if she considered herself bisexual. *Will we ever have a celebrity answer this question "Yes, I do."* Instead Jolie said, "I consider myself a very sexual person who loves who she loves. Whatever sex they may be." Oh, I see, Angelina, then you couldn't possibly be bisexual.

Walters followed up by asking if she could fall in love with a person of either (sic) gender. "If I fell in love with a woman tomorrow, would I, you know, feel that it's OK and it's right to want to kiss her and touch her if I fell in love with her in that way? Yeah."

I guess for what it's worth we can be happy that someone at least uses a definition of being bisexual that we could agree on even if they can't seem to bring themselves to use the word.



Got bisexuality?



## Bisexual Resource Guide Calls For Submissions

Enormous changes are underway for the next edition of the *Bisexual Resource Guide*. More writing, more stories, YOUR stories! The editor is seeking short submissions (up to 250 words) on the following topics:

- \* Why Bi? (calling myself bisexual)
- \* What Do Bisexuals Want: The Bisexual Agenda
- \* Coming Out as Bisexual
- \* Living My Bisexual Life
- \* Bisexuals in Relationships
- \* Looking at the World Through Bisexual Eyes/ A Bi Perspective
- \* Bi Families
- \* Bi Activism
- \* Crossing Categories (bi & trans, etc.): communicating the complexity of occupying simultaneous both/and positions.

All styles of writing are welcome: prose, poetry, essays, personal stories, cartoons, etc. Deadline: September 1, 2003. Send your submissions to: Robyn Ochs, 79 Eastland Road, Jamaica Plain MA 02130 USA, or via e-mail to [ochs@bi.org](mailto:ochs@bi.org).

## Love is Love: Marriage is Still for Straights

The following letter was forwarded to The Boston Globe after one of its columnists derided the concept of same sex marriage. The Globe recently came out in favor of same sex marriage.

Dear Editor:

Same sex marriage is the next step forward in our nation's quest for full civil rights. Jeff Jacoby states that 40% of the Vermont civil unions were made up of previously married persons. Well, I would bet that about that same percentage of straight marrying couples were previously married too. This says nothing about gay marriage per se. Marriages usually break up for many reasons which have nothing to do with sexual orientation.

On the other hand, marriages are made for many complex reasons. He assumes that one can "choose" to marry an other sex vs. same sex partner. I am a bisexual and have known this since age 20. Theoretically, I could choose to marry an other sex person. At age 53, I have had more than one chance to marry. My loves (yes, one at a time) have included a gay man, a lesbian, a bisexual/transgendered man, and straight men. I have not chosen (or been able) to "marry" any of them. It seemed unfair that my legal status depended upon the status of my choice of mate, when I remained the same. But my reasons for not marrying are much deeper than any desire to conform to or rebel against traditional concepts of marriage.

When I turned thirty, I wrote a song called "I'm Settled!" on a dare, and asked my family for heirlooms and household items. It worked. My reasons for marrying or not marrying are not anyone's business, but I should have the same options that heterosexual people have. Most queer people I know have not lightly "chosen" to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered. In fact, among my generation, coming out was often an alternative to suicidal depression.

I would ask Jeff Jacoby and his ilk to imagine being in my shoes. Love is love. If you were told to love someone other than your wife, for "traditional society's good," could you do it?

Sincerely,  
Marcia Deihl



## CD Review: Scott Freedman, *Some Company*

Reviewed by Deb Morley

I was delighted to learn that I'll be able to catch Skott Freedman performing at the 2003 North American Conference on Bisexuality in San Diego this summer. My introduction to the music of this bisexual singer/songwriter/pianist was in February when I went with other Boston-area bis to The Kendall Café to hear Freedman perform. Within minutes the room swelled with sound produced by his incredible keyboard skills, only to be penetrated by his rich and powerful voice. The well known favorites of Cat Stevens, "The Wind" and Marc Cohn's "Walking in Memphis" were performed along with many original compositions.

*Some Company*, Freedman's most recent CD released in February of this year, is a thought-provoking collection of songs. His insightful lyrics tell stories of love and loss. He relives memories of life's challenges, and creates a connection to his listeners by naming our fears, dreams and desires. With changes in tempo and poems put to music, the emotions and moods of Skott Freedman are captured on this recording. Once again, Freedman delivers another performance from the soul.





## Bi Irish Hosts Second European Bisexual Conference

By Denia Yeshua

When the Dutch hosts of the first ever European Bisexual Conference named it EBC1, they did so because they hoped someone will pick up the baton and actually host EBC2. An Irish group, Bi-Irish, took up the challenge and arranged for the conference to coincide with the tail end of the Dublin Pride celebrations, July 5-7, 2003.

The conference took place in Dublin's LGBT resource center, OUTHouse. Located in a rambling Georgian building still in need of some TLC, with bright rainbow flags at its doors, the centre boasts a coffee shop and many meeting rooms up a winding (and creaky) staircase. Some 50 delegates hailed from all over Europe: the UK, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, Hungary, Spain, France and Ireland as well as a few who made the journey from the USA. As the delegates began to register, it was wonderful to see the variety—all ages and persuasions represented.

The conference theme, "Loving the Difference" was the subject of an inspiring and provoking keynote speech at the opening plenary session on Friday evening by Robyn Ochs, an American and self-confessed "professional bisexual." Robyn spoke about the feeling of being an outsider in the "mainstream" lesbian and gay community, a younger sibling, hesitant and unsure of acceptance. Delegates around the room were nodding. She spoke of our attempts, as activists, to build a new open-minded, less prejudiced world, and the futility of doing so whilst using our

"master's tools," being our own mindsets and prejudices inherited from our parents and upbringing. She communicated to us the importance of being open ourselves to options we may not ourselves seek, to understand what we are not. Those words provoked a discussion which carried on to a wine reception which lasted, in best Irish tradition, for the rest of the evening!

On Saturday and Sunday, the delegates attended a full schedule of workshops, ranging from the academic to the lighthearted.

Relationships in particular were discussed in several workshops, questioning presumptions about the concept of family, monogamy/polyamory, jealousy and sharing in the context of a relationship. Many of the sessions offered practical advice about bi-activism, bi-journalism, creating bi-friendly spaces. On the lighter side, a workshop was dedicated to a queer critique of the movie *Shrek!* and the hetero-normative depictions of cartoons. Yet another was dedicated to "sacred

sexercises," a hands-on, practical workshop which gave a taste of erotic massage in a queer context.

At mid-day Saturday, the conference took a pause to join the Dublin Pride Parade. Under the EBC2 banner (made of purple fabric and pink fluffy fake-fur), the delegates joined a flamboyant, energetic and excited crowd of some 5,000 participants, who lit up Dublin's O'Connell Street in a colourful show of strength to the sounds of a marching band, whistles, and loud dancing music that had the crowds cheering as it went by. The parade was followed by an open-air concert given by the best of Dublin's talent, headlined by a 7-foot drag queen dressed in a huge rainbow flag.

Saturday night was another party (it is Ireland after all), this time in fancy dress. The Dutch delegates stood out in their PVC, leather and rubber outfits and regaled the delegates with tales of their hesitant journey



## Autumn Gender-Free Dance Camp

Lavender Country & Folk Dancers is sponsoring its annual Autumn Gender-Free Dance Camp on September 26-28 in Becket, Massachusetts at the Chimney Corners YMCA Camp. Register early to save money. For more information contact Bob Peterson, 85 Haynes Road, Townsend, MA 02137, 978-597-5861, camp@lcfcd.org

Visit BBWN online at:

**[biresource.org/bbwn](http://biresource.org/bbwn)**

for a calendar listing of local  
bisexual events.

**Irish** continues on page 10



## Queer Political Training

The Gay & Lesbian Victory Foundation is sponsoring two four-day intensive political trainings on campaigns and the electoral process. One is in Chicago, Illinois, September 18-21, and the second is in Atlanta, Georgia, December 4-7. The Victory Training Institute moves from city to city, educating potential candidates, campaign managers and activists on the ins and outs of message, strategy, voter contact and more. This is designed for openly lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans-gendered individuals who are running or who have an interest in running for office; who would like to manage a candidate or ballot initiative campaign; or who have an interest in the electoral process. Party affiliation does not matter. Cost: \$400 covers room, most meals, and the training and related materials. Space is limited. For more information or an application, go to [www.victoryfoundation.org](http://www.victoryfoundation.org) or contact the Victory Foundation at 202-628-9151.

## Irish from page 9

through Irish customs with their outfits and accessories.

A Spanish filmmaker based in Dublin, Fernando Sanchez, filmed his own version of the Big Brother diary room, Bi-Brother, throughout the conference, asking delegates to frankly discuss with bi-brother their thoughts of bisexuality, gender and the conference.

Overall, there was a tremendous air of camaraderie among the delegates. Friendships created and details exchanged, this conference was definitely a bonding experience for all. Echoes of Robyn Ochs' speech were discussed throughout and a real sense of community was commented on by many delegates who compared this experience, most favourably so, with other LGBT conferences where bi delegates felt somewhat like outsiders. Combine this with the Irish laid-back attitude and Dublin's delicious nightlife, and you might begin to imagine just how exhausted the delegates were when they left.

At the closing session, Germany was provisionally selected to host EBC3 in 2005. Try as the Germans might, going one better than EBC2 will be a tough mountain to climb! ▼

## Dear BiWomen,

I had the most delightful travel experience recently, and wanted to share this with other readers. While traveling in Ireland, I was referred to a lesbian-owned women's B&B in Galway, on the west coast. I was met at the station by Bernie and Sally, two warm-hearted women, and their gentle dog, Cara. Bernie and Sallie were full of warmth and stories (Cara was not as talkative), and recommendations of things to do locally. Their establishment is both inexpensive and comfortable, and Bernie serves up a delicious breakfast as well! Most of the guests are lesbian, with some bi and straight women as well. I was made to feel very welcome. If you are planning a trip to Ireland, I highly recommend that you spend a night—or more—at Side By Side. ([www.sidebysidebb.50megs.com/](http://www.sidebysidebb.50megs.com/), 353 91 592760, or [sidebyside@eircom.net](mailto:sidebyside@eircom.net)).

Robyn Ochs

## Gaze from page 7

love with a woman and then leave her husband to be with that woman. A woman could be committed to a man, fall in love with a woman and have her move into their home to all live together. A woman could have a regular Friday night sex date with her favorite male squeeze (who is bi too) and then spend the rest of the weekend hanging out with her various girlfriends. Now these are some of the storylines that I'd like to see explored but I doubt that many of them would please a lesbian viewer.

But, I also don't want a bi character to be used just as a plot twist, a way to "spice up" the story, or a way to explain why a character is so unstable or untrustworthy (this can certainly be said of many GLBT characters over time). I want believable, multi-dimensional characters who understand themselves and who care about the other people in their lives because those are the kinds of bi people I know.

I believe this tension between a bi woman's gaze and a lesbian gaze is partly because many lesbians still are not able to see a bi identity as its own identity. It seems quite sad that each time a bi woman character is explored (and minimally at that) that a lesbian audience would feel let down and might view these representations as erasures of lesbians rather than a further understanding of desire which includes same sex love.

I recall having a discussion with a lesbian a few years ago who was insistent upon viewing Virginia Woolf as a lesbian because, she felt, if society had allowed Woolf to choose to be only with women and not marry a man for a sense of propriety then she would have chosen that. Somewhere in that argument it suggests again that bisexuality is not its own sexuality, that if the world accepted our gay selves then we would choose not to be bi but gay. We know that that is not true for many of us and we deserve to have our own stories told and appreciated within the greater tapestry of GLBT representation. ▼

It's very important to have bi role models. We need to muddy the blank sheet of invisibility. We need more variety in the available models and more ways of imagining bi life—both to help people of all ages come out and for all of us to live more open lives.

—Anonymous



## CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

### August 25 ♦ Monday

**Mixed Gender Poly Support Group**, 6:30-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. This group is intended as a supportive environment to talk about poly-related issues in your life, to ask questions, or just to hear what other people have to say.

### August 28-Sept. 1 ♦ Thursday-Monday

**Bi Camp**, a weekend camping trip in the Northampton area for bisexual and bifriendly people. For more registration and camping information contact BiCamp@tdint.com.

### September 2 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "We Are All Getting Older: Does that affect your sexuality and sexual identity?" See August 5th.

### September 3 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual**, 7-8:45 p.m. See April 2nd.

### September 5 ♦ Friday

**New England Pride Night at Six Flags**. This is the first Pride event to be held at the Six Flags amusement park in Agawam, Massachusetts. Tickets are only available online at [www.sixflags.com](http://www.sixflags.com). Use the Tickets tab once you are on the site and use the code "Pride" to purchase tickets. (Check closer to deadline to make sure they are still running this event.)

### September 7 ♦ Sunday

**BBWN 4th Annual Book Swap Brunch** at Ellyn's in Somerville, Noon. Along with relaxing and chatting, we'll be looking over books others have brought to swap. You won't go away empty handed. What's left over will go towards the BBWN book drive to raise money for the organization. Please bring the usual potluck dish and drinks to share. Contact Ellyn at [nellythrustmor@aol.com](mailto:nellythrustmor@aol.com) or 617-623-5535.



### September 9 ♦ Tuesday

**Queer Married Women's Discussion Group**, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. See August 12th.

### September 10 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting**, 6:30-8:30 p.m. See August 13th.

### September 16 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Red Flags in Relationships: What's your bottom line? Patterns?" See August 5th.

### September 18 ♦ Thursday

**Coming Out as Bisexual**, 7-9 p.m. See April 2nd.

### September 19 ♦ Friday

**BiWomen Submissions Deadline**. This issue's theme

is "Healing Paths." See page 2 for more ideas. Send submissions to: *BiWomen*, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA, 02140 or e-mail to [nellythrustmor@aol.com](mailto:nellythrustmor@aol.com).

### September 20 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Brunch** at Doyle's in Jamaica Plain, 11:30 a.m. The address is 3484 Washington Street, between the Green Street and Forest Hills stops on the Orange Line.

### September 22 ♦ Monday

**Mixed Gender Poly Support Group**, 6:30-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. See August 25th.

### September 23 ♦ Wednesday

**Celebrate Bisexuality Day!!** The Bisexual Resource Center is sponsoring a local event, details were not complete by press time. Check at [www.biresource.org](http://www.biresource.org) for information.

### September 28 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch**, 1 p.m. Veggie Planet is popular and centrally located so we're doing it again. Veggie Planet is located at 47 Palmer Street (at Club Passim) in Harvard Square, Cambridge. It's vegetarian food. T Stop is Harvard Square on the Red Line.

### September 30 ♦ Tuesday

**BiWomen mailing**, 7-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center. Can you say label, stuff, and seal? Join us. Socialize during and after.



Look ahead to Bi Bowling this Fall!

## Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

### Ongoing Events

#### Wednesdays:

**Gendertalk**, 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

#### Women's Club Nights

#### Every Third Saturday:

**Glitter Switch: Drag/Karaoke and dancing** at Hollywood KTV, 41 Essex Street, Chinatown T, Boston. 10 p.m.-2 a.m. \$10 cover.

#### Sundays: Queer night, 9

p.m.-1 a.m., the Milky Way, 403 Centre St, Jamaica Plain. DJ and dance floor.

**Thursdays: Dyke Night** at the Midway Cafe, 3496 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain. Pool table 8-10, DJ with dancing 10-2.



### SUBSCRIPTION RATE

for *BiWomen*  
(sliding scale)

- \_\_\_ \$0-\$20 (pay what you can)
- \_\_\_ \$20-\$30 (suggested)
- \_\_\_ \$30-\$100 Extra Special Donor
- \_\_\_ Renewal
- \_\_\_ New Subscriber

**BiWomen wants you!!!**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140



## The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

## Ongoing Events

### 1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

**Bi Women's Rap.** 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

### 2nd Tuesdays:

**Married Bi Women's Discussion Group.** 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

### First Wednesdays, Third Thursdays:

**NEW DAY: Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-9 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

# CALENDAR

## August 4 ♦ Monday

**Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group.** 7-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. The group discusses issues relevant to women in the poly community, especially those of interest to queer women. It ranges from social chatting to more in-depth discussions, depending on what people want to talk about each month. All self-identified women are welcome! Questions to Rosa at rcarson@wso.williams.edu.

## August 5 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center.** 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Topic: "Commitment." Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

## August 6 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-8:45 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

## August 12 ♦ Tuesday

**Queer Married Women's Discussion Group.** 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. The group is facilitated by Denise Garrow-Pruitt who can be contacted at dgarrow@rcn.com. Call 617-354-8807 for directions.

## August 13 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting.** 6:30-8:30 p.m. All bi community members welcome to attend. New board members are needed. Stop by and see first-hand what it's all about. The meeting is on the 4th floor of the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. in Back Bay.

## August 16 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Brunch.** 11:30 a.m. It's our annual summer-brunch outing to AuBon Pain in Harvard Square, Cambridge. Cheap brunch and good people-watching. Nearest T is Harvard Square on the Red Line.

## August 17 ♦ Sunday

**BBWN Brunch** at Katrina's in Somerville, Noon. Please bring the usual potluck dish or drinks to share. For those interested, we'll take a hike after the brunch. Call Katrina at 617-833-3035 or e-mail her at katp32@yahoo.com to let her know you'll be coming.

## August 19 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center.** 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Spirituality and Bisexuality: How do they relate to you?" See August 5th.

## August 21 ♦ Thursday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-9 p.m. August 6th.

## August 24 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch.** 1:00 p.m. Potluck brunch at Mycroft's. We'll provide scrambled eggs, pancakes, fresh squeezed OJ and assortment of jams, jellies and butters. You bring yourself and either a dish or a few dollars to cover expenses. 15 Hollis St. #2, Cambridge, steps off the 77 bus line or about a 7 minute walk from Davis Square stop on the Red Line. Contact root@ihack.net for more information or directions.



## Support BBWN with Your Used Books, CDs, VHS tapes, and DVDs!

Long-time member Gail Zacharias is helping BBWN with fundraising by listing the used books, etc on various online channels. 40% of the sale price will be donated to BBWN. If you have books to donate, please bring them to the BRC office, or contact Robyn (ochs@bi.org, 617-413-2717) to arrange for book transfer.

The books must be in reasonably good shape—in particular, all pages must be present and readable (some highlighting and underlining is ok if it doesn't obscure the text), and the cover must be present and firmly attached to the pages (it's ok for the dust jacket of a hardcover to be missing). And the books mustn't be smelly (e.g. musty or smoky), since Gail will be storing them in her home!



"When Hippies Roamed The Earth," Songs & Stories with Marcia Deihl, 7 p.m. Zeitgeist Gallery (in Inman Sq., across from S & S). Donation requested.

**CALENDAR** continues on page 11



## Compassion Heals

By Dove

I found my way onto a healing path in the late 1980s after moving far enough away from my family of origin that I could ask the question "how have the experiences of my childhood affected me?" without anyone in my family hearing me. Knowing little about what self-help options were available to me, I sought out talk therapy.

The choice to undergo psychotherapy was very cerebral for me. I concluded that because I grew up in a family in which there was mental illness and violence that I must have been affected by this in some pretty significant ways. I hadn't really "connected all the dots" between those experiences and the bad choices I had made in relationships, anger and rage that I sometimes expressed inappropriately, substance use and abuse, and a general feeling of "crappiness" that I carried with me every day.

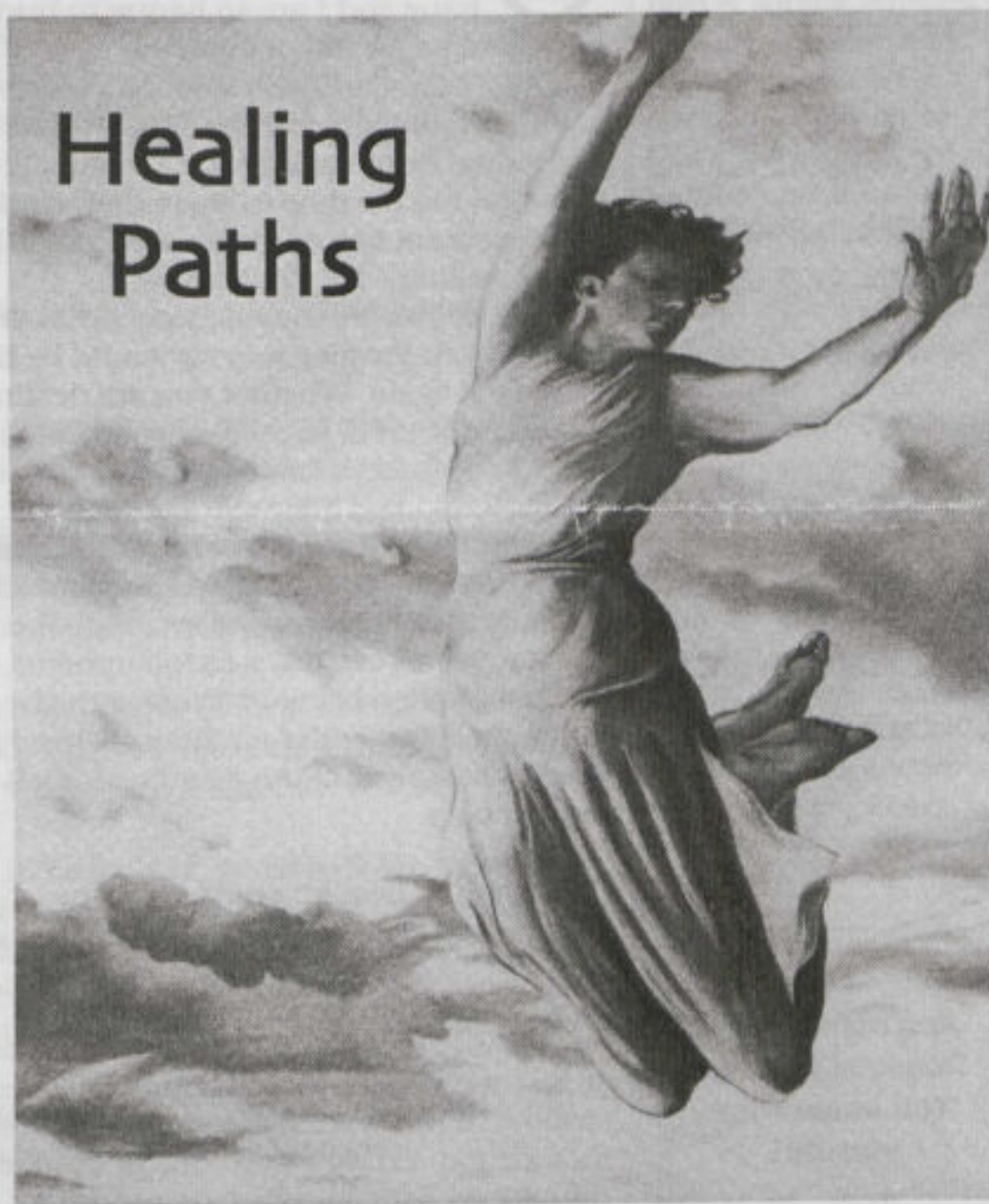
After a few years of individual therapy with an insightful practitioner, I was inspired to continue peeling away the layers and seek out other roadways of remedy. At the time I was identifying as lesbian so when I stumbled upon a flyer for a "lesbian therapy group" I decided to inquire. Membership required an interview with one of the two psychotherapists who led the group. While I recognized that this offering was much more structured and formal than the experience I had with my first therapist, who had come out to me as Wiccan and actually channeled in one of my therapy sessions, I was drawn to this group and wanted to experience what it had to offer. To my surprise, I found "group work" much more challenging than one-on-one therapy. The multiplicity of relationships in the room could be overwhelming at times. Learning to know one's own truth and speak it in the moment seemed to become essential. The group was a microcosm of my world in which I could try out new tools and ways of being with others.

After a couple of years I became quite fond of the other members of the group despite the strict rule that we were not to socialize or have contact with one another outside of the therapeutic setting. This in itself provided much fodder for analyzing our relationship issues as we were constantly running into each other in the lesbian spaces of Durham, North Carolina.

Well into the second year of my participation in this group, after I had split with my partner of 8 years, I found myself attracted to a man who I

**Compassion** continues on page 8

## Healing Paths



Air by Linda Post, 1988

## Healing From Society is a Full-Time Occupation

By [REDACTED]

Emotional growth is a funny thing. It can't easily be measured on a graph, often defies quantification, and can act a lot like electrons: it shows up only when you go looking for it. The rest of the time it lurks about sort of amorously—you know it's happening (or has happened), it's just often difficult to put your finger on it.

One moment of emotional growth and healing, for myself, however, is directly and quantifiably related to my personal awakening to my bisexual nature in 1991, as a freshman in college. Prior to the "moment" of self-acceptance (and it was quite a tangible moment, with sounds and conver-

**Society** continues on page 9

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North American Bi Conference.....	10
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## Volunteers of the Month

Gail Zacharias

Robyn Ochs

Deb Morley

Wayne Bryant

Holly Williams

Katrina

Stephanie Green

Carla Imperial

And many more  
fabulous people!  
You know who  
you are!

*BiWomen* is published bi-monthly.

**Editor:**

Ellyn Ruthstrom

**Printed on  
recycled paper**

*The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.*

## Healing Inside and Out

**O**ur theme of *Healing Paths* resounded for many people this issue and I am so happy to bring you these pages full of experiences and insights. Many different women's voices are here, telling the truths of their own individual deep healing and I thank them all for taking the time to share their stories with us. From sexual to medical to emotional healing—they're all here.

When you are unwell, sometimes you cannot even imagine what it would be like to be well again. Whether you are dealing with illness, grief, psychological pain, or societal dis-ease, it can all feel overwhelming at times. And it is truly amazing all the different paths that people have found to bring themselves back into balance. Dealing with homophobia and biphobia in our daily lives can take its toll upon us, but just as often being in touch with our sexuality is the tender antidote we need to remind ourselves of our fragility as well as our strength.

Alas, my own lovely Mac computer that I use to put together the newsletter is badly in need of healing. I try not to be superstitious but on page 3 Robyn Ochs mentions that we've never missed an issue of *BiWomen*. In the last 48 hours I've been afraid that this wonderful issue might be the first gap in that record due to technical difficulties. But the newsletter must get out! Barring any unforeseen problems, you will be reading this during the first days of October as you normally would.

I am very excited about this issue and do think it is wonderful, but let me apologize ahead of time for any errors you may find in it. I was unable to even print out pages of the newsletter to proofread it properly so there may be typos and design problems that I could not detect just by looking at the screen. If anyone knows of a good Mac doctor, please let me know.

Ellyn Ruthstrom

## NEXT IN *BiWOMEN*

The *BiWomen* theme for  
December/January is:

### Bisexual Boston

Boston is known around the country, even the world, as a hotbed of bisexual activism and community.

Why do you think that is so?

What's going on in Boston that makes us special? Have you lived in other places? What is the difference between the bi communities you have experienced?

**Deadline: November 15, 2003**

## Future Issues

Send your suggestions to  
[nellythrustmor@aol.com](mailto:nellythrustmor@aol.com)

## PLEASE SUBMIT TO *BiWOMEN* !

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, black-and-white art, news, and views to:

*BiWomen*

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to

[NellyThrustmor@aol.com](mailto:NellyThrustmor@aol.com)

***If you do not want your name  
published, please tell us.***

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## Dearest BBWN,

It has been 20 years since BBWN was birthed. 1983 seems a very long time ago, and the circumstances of my life and all of the other founders have changed so much since that time. We have changed, and the world around us has changed.

Thinking back to those times, and comparing them with today, I am filled with awe. Back then, NO "gay and lesbian" organizations explicitly included bisexuals—or transgendered folks—in their names or even in their mission statements. We were certainly on the defensive, and I heard the "b-word" mentioned most often in the context of the following sentences:

**I would never go out with a bisexual. You know they will always leave you for a man.**

and

**Go out and make your own community. Why are you people trying to attach yourselves to ours?**

There was this idea that gay men and lesbians had been around for a long time, had done a lot of hard work building community, and then suddenly one day those odd and annoying bisexuals showed up—out of nowhere!—and tried to glom themselves onto the pre-existing gay and lesbian community.

People just couldn't understand that bisexual people were there all along, but that people were presuming that they were lesbian or gay. Or else lesbian or gay identity felt like a good fit for them at one time but no longer was, or else they were bisexual people who allowed themselves to be presumed lesbian or gay as a political strategy.

And yes, there was a strong pressure to do this. To quote Carl Wittman (1969) "We continue to call ourselves homosexual, not bisexual, even if we do make it with the opposite sex also, because saying 'oh, I'm bi' is a cop out for a gay. ... We'll be gay until everyone has forgotten it's an issue. Then we'll begin to be complete."

My personal theory, looking back at history, is that in the 1980s the "gay" movement finally reached a point of strength where it could tolerate internal differences. Bisexual activists were only one of the myriad groups speaking up, creating their own organizations, writing their own anthologies, finding their voice: disabled folks, African Americans, Asian and Pacific Islanders, Latinos, older people, working class people, femmes, butches, s/m folks, Jewish people—AND BISEXUALS. We were a cacophony of voices, all clear that it was now OUR moment to be heard.

And it was very scary to come out as bisexual in 1983, but we were doing it. And we're still doing it. And it's still hard, but not as hard. Things really have changed, and BBWN is one of the instruments of that change.

I'm so very proud of us.

We are a strange little organization. We have never had a hierarchy, not even a president. The only "office holders" are those who fulfill a logistical function of the group: Ellyn (WE LOVE YOU!) as editor of *BiWomen*, Gail as mailing list maven, Deb as brunch diva and co-coordinator of the newsletter mailings with Katrina, myself as treasurer, etc. We have no paid staff, no legal existence, no guaranteed source of income (our income comes from dues, donations, button sales and our bookselling project). But somehow we have survived these 20 years, without ever skipping an issue of *BiWomen*. We have had times when we have been more active, and times when we have been less active.

WE ARE YOU. So please involve yourself! Come to a planning meeting, help mail the newsletter, write something for *BiWomen*, give of yourself. Donate your money, your time, your enthusiasm.

BBWN is very important. Someone asked me what BBWN does. My first reply was to say that we have brunches and other social events and we put out the *BiWomen* newsletter. But we do something even more important: we hold a space in the Boston community—and beyond, for bisexual identity. Our very existence is important.

With love,  
Robyn Ochs

## Brunch Coordinator Wants You to Host!

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the brunch coordinator, so please contact her at [dgm@ias.ga.unc.edu](mailto:dgm@ias.ga.unc.edu) if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! And check out the calendar on pages 11-12 for the brunches and other activities coming up in October and November. Hope you can join us.



*The 4th Annual Bookswap Brunch was a roaring success with over 20 women dropping by Ellyn's in Somerville.*



## Intersex and Trans Conference Planned

A one-day interdisciplinary conference on Centering Intersex and Trans-Identities in Academia, Activism, and the Helping Professions will be held at Simmons College, Boston, Massachusetts on Saturday, February 22, 2004. The deadline for papers is October 15, 2003. Papers may address, though are not limited to, discussing the conference themes and how they relate to intersex identities, trans-identities, theory, and activism; pedagogical approaches to intersex and trans-related topics; feminism and women's studies; intersectionality; LGBTQ studies; social work; the medical field; the politics and policing of "women only" spaces; intersex and trans-identities in the arts, and other related topics. The conference organizers welcome proposals for individual papers, sessions, roundtable discussions, and workshops. To e-mail proposals or for more information, contact conference coordinators Christina Borel at [christina.borel@simmons.edu](mailto:christina.borel@simmons.edu) or Jessica Hague at [jessica.hague@simmons.edu](mailto:jessica.hague@simmons.edu).

## Sexual Healing

**I**n your most secret places what do you long for most? What are your most precious dreams? At first I wanted to be a girl, and then a woman. But as I got up the courage to actually change my sex, I started to dream about being a sensuous, and passionate woman. I knew how to change my sex, but I had no idea how to be either sensuous or passionate.

As a man, I was very loving, but I could never let myself surrender my defenses enough to feel either my sensuality or my passion. My body was all-wrong, and I just wouldn't let myself feel these things. Or maybe, it is just harder for men to feel their passion.

My first lover was the most wildly erotic, and lustful woman I have ever known. I wanted to be like her! But my sexuality was so repressed that I despaired of ever fulfilling this dream.

So, this is the almost magical story of how my sexuality has healed and blossomed. I say magical because it deals with past lives and is far beyond the realm of traditional healing. I imagine it will stretch your imagination to its limits. But the results speak for themselves.

This story took place about two and a half years ago, about four months after I had my sex change surgery. At the time I was a freshman at the Barbara Brennan School for Healing (BBSH). I was studying to be an energy healer; BBSH energy healing is similar to Reiki energy healing, but more complex. I volun-

By Holly Williams

teered to be a client for a sophomore who was learning to do past life healings.

The purpose of an energy healing is to open and balance your seven chakras, so that your energy flows smoothly. Chakras are energy centers that control how you feel and think about the different kinds of energy in your body. In my case the healing was going to focus on my second chakra. This chakra controls the quantity and the quality of sexual energy that I was willing to experience. My second chakra was almost closed and little sexual energy was present.

When something traumatic happens to you, you tell yourself that you will never let yourself think about, or experience those feelings again. You use your energy to freeze that experience in time. And you carry that frozen time capsule with you in your energy field from lifetime to lifetime until you are willing to experience the trauma either in your real life or in your past life.

During a healing the healer places her hand on your chakra and runs energy through it. The energy is channeled from the Divine; it does not come from the healer, but simply passes through the healer into the client. When I make a strong connection to the Goddess, which is how I experience the Divine, I experience a serene feeling of peace that feels very beautiful and sometimes ecstatic.

My healer asked me what I needed healed\*. I said that, I desperately wanted to be

### Healing your wounds and your pain

**H**ealing your wounds and your pain starts at the center of your being; at the level where you keep those qualities that you treasure about yourself. For me these treasures are qualities like love, compassion, beauty, integrity, and courage. Developing these qualities fuller is the reason I was born. But they are so precious to me that for most of my life I would not even try to develop them. What are the qualities that you treasure about yourself?

The healing then moves up to the level of your intentions for your life. What is it that you would like to accomplish before you die? What kind of person do you want to become? What kind of person are you now? How are they different? How can you create the woman that you want to become?

Then, the healing moves up again to the level of beliefs and needs. What do you believe about yourself? What do you need from life to be happy? Which of your beliefs keeps you from being happy and how do these beliefs limit you from meeting your needs?

Would you like to do an exercise to help you with your healing? Think about your wound and your pain. Now write a letter about your wound and your pain. Let yourself really feel deeply into these places. Now try to answer some of the above questions about yourself.

Much love and blessings, Holly Williams



a sensuous and passionate woman. I lay down on his healing table with my face up. And he began the healing. In the beginning of the healing, my healer opened all of my chakras. Then he came back to my second chakra and filled it with energy for a long, long time. I thought, "Nothing is happening," and I was very sad. Then suddenly, I found myself in an oasis 700 years ago. In this place Allah was God. I was lying on my back in a tent, and I was trying to catch my breath after a very intense contraction. The midwife was trying to calm me down. I was terrified of what was happening. I was alone with her and I wanted the comfort of my mother and sisters. I was sixteen and the baby was coming much too early. The contractions were very close together and I was trying to push, but I was so afraid that the baby would die.

When the baby came, he didn't move or cry. The midwife would not let me hold him. He just lay there in the midwife's hand. He was so small; he was just a little larger than her hand. His skin was a dark brown and he was covered in blood, which the midwife did not bother to wipe off. I counted his fingers and toes. They were all there. Then, I noticed that his arms and legs were horribly twisted and deformed. I guess it was a blessing that he died this way. But... I wanted him so badly! I had been singing and talking to him just a few hours ago. And now he was no more!

The midwife took him outside to show my husband. My husband entered the tent in a rage. He was cursing me for being so sensual and passionate. He said Allah was punishing him for my lust. He kicked me in the side as hard as he could. I rolled into a ball to protect myself and he kicked me in the back. Then he dragged me to my feet and slapped me in the face. He threw me naked out of his tent, and banished me from his sight. He said I was no longer his wife.

The vision ended and I wept quietly. I tried hard to control the grief I felt over the loss of my baby, and from the abuse I suffered from my husband. I call this a vision, but it is so much more than that. I felt like I was really there! I really felt the pain while it happened, and my tears and grief felt real and lasted for days. I can still close my eyes and remember

the whole experience as if it really happened. Which I believe it did.

The healing was almost over. I had stopped crying and I was just beginning to relax, when another vision appeared. This time it was my thirteen-year-old daughter Katie. I could see her and hear her just like she was standing next to me. She said, "Dad, It's time for you to stop mourning that baby. I was that baby, and I am here for you NOW! It wasn't time for me to be born then. It's time for you to take back your sensuality and passion." I decided that she was right, and I set my intention to be the sensuous, passionate woman that I longed to be.

Three months ago, I accidentally discovered my G spot. It was an accident, because I

didn't know I had one. These orgasms are the biggest WOW! I had no idea that anything ever felt this good. It is such a wonderfully feminine way to experience my body. It is a thrilling and exhilarating confirmation that I really am becoming the woman that I have always dreamed of being. And if that is not enough, I am starting to fantasize and dream about having sex with men. This is something that I have never done before. Men have always scared me! So, I don't know what to do about this, but I am

starting to think that maybe, once again, I should follow my dreams. ▼

\*Barbara Brennan believes that most healing can be done on your present life, and that past life healings are not the cure all that some people believe.



Woman Rising/Sky by Mary Beth Edelson, 1973

## LGBTI and Ally Conference in October

William Paterson University is sponsoring its Third Annual Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Ally Leadership Conference on October 10 with the theme of "Embracing Diversity, Creating Change." Workshops will include Coming Out on Campus, Bisexuality 101, Intersex: What The Heck Is It and Does LGBT need a vowel?, Diversity in the Transgender Community and more. Louise Sullivan-Blum, author of *You're Not From Around Here, Are You? A Lesbian in Small-Town America*, will be the keynote speaker. For more information or to register visit [ww2.wpunj.edu/womenscenter/LGBT.htm](http://ww2.wpunj.edu/womenscenter/LGBT.htm).

### Judy Glick, M.Ed., LMHC licensed psychotherapist for lesbians, gays, and bisexuals

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## Poetry Workshop

Resistant Words: A Poetry Workshop with Letta Neely, will be held on Tuesdays, October 7-November 4, 6-9 p.m. How do we write poems that are deeply personal and extremely political without ranting or getting locked down? How do we say what needs to be said during these "Homeland Security" times in ways that we (the writers) and our readers can really absorb? During this five-week poetry workshop, participants will explore politics, fear, and poetic structures. Writers will be expected to participate in homework, exercises, and group critique. In addition, each writer will receive written critiques from Letta. \$175. Scholarships and payment plans are available. For more information, contact the Center for New Words at 617-876-5310 or [newwords@theworld.com](mailto:newwords@theworld.com).

## "My Body's a Temple, But Nothing is Simple"\*

By [REDACTED]

The last few years have been a healing process for me. I am sharing my experience dealing with a "woman's problem" in case this information might help others seeking a similar healing path.

All my life I felt a little different, like I had some kind of chemical imbalance. As I got older, I started feeling even more that way. I would often feel depressed, and go through phases where I quickly gained large amounts of weight. My periods were unpredictable and became very infrequent (a condition known as anovulation).

As the years passed, and my occasional "monthlies" became more like "yearlies," I became worried. I'm too young to be menopausal. Am I infertile? Is something seriously wrong with me? The "curse" started to seem like a blessing. I felt depressed. I felt prematurely old. I didn't feel like I was a woman anymore. I wanted to be a normal girl, not just "normal for me."

I should have suspected a correlation between weight gain, depression, and irregular menstrual cycles, because they usually occurred in combination. Over time, I developed high blood pressure, borderline diabetes, obesity, and other chronic illnesses. My doctors nagged me into believing that my failing health was totally my fault. I'm heavy because I eat too much. I eat too much because I'm depressed. I don't have periods because I'm too heavy. And so on. It was an endless circle of blame.

Doctors told me my health would improve if I lost weight, but they were merely blaming a symptom for other symptoms of the same undiagnosed disorder—a condition known as Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS). Most doctors can't confirm the diagnosis, and aren't aware of recent research that has led to a new theory regarding its underlying cause. So they treat the symptoms—often prescribing birth control pills to force periods, and antidepressants to help cope with the other symptoms.

It's hard to know how

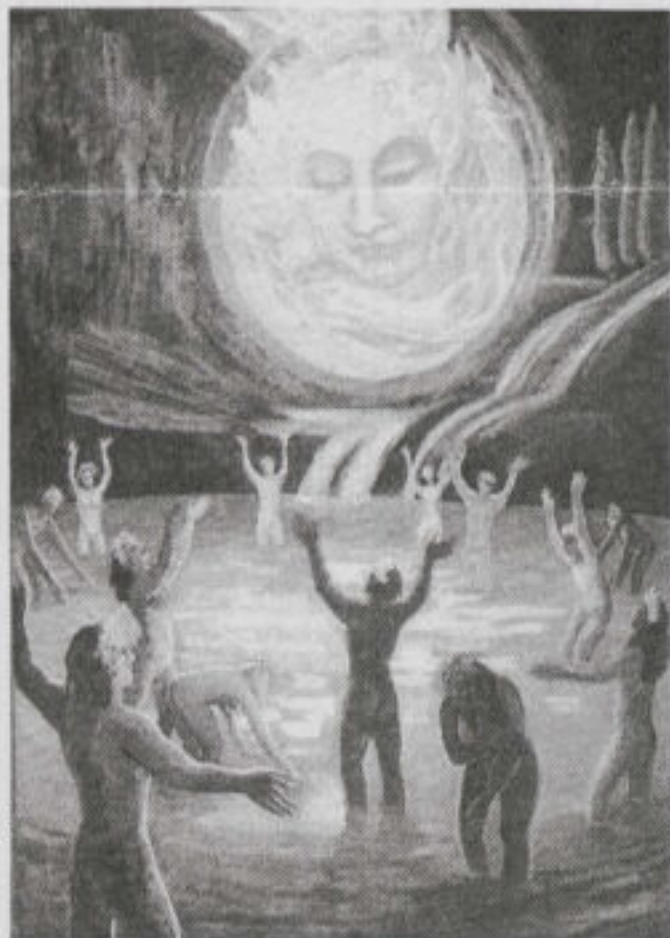
common it is to have PCOS, because it often goes undiagnosed. I have read that 10% of women have it, but I have spoken with an expert in this area who believes the true number is closer to 30%. Like most women with the disorder, my symptoms started to appear when I was a teenager. If left untreated it can lead to endometrial cancer, cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, depression, and other deadly diseases. There's some evidence it may run in families, suggesting a genetic component.

Fortunately, a biopsy confirmed that I did not have cancer. Women with PCOS have a higher than average risk of developing endometrial cancer, because the lining of the uterus builds up when menstruation is absent for long periods of time. Since I can't take the usual treatment, birth control pills, the nurse who performed the biopsy gave me a prescription for Provera (an artificial form of the hormone Progesterone), and told me to take it every three months to induce a "bleed." I wasn't satisfied with that solution. I wanted to have a regular cycle by restoring ovulation. She didn't know if that was possible, and didn't seem to understand why I cared. She said that if I ever decided to get pregnant I would need the help of a reproductive endocrinologist. Otherwise, she said, all I needed to do was take hormone pills for the rest of my childbearing years.

I realized that, if there is a better solution, I had to find it on my own. I spent months researching PCOS and treatment options on the Internet, often wading through medical jargon I couldn't understand. I eventually read about some recent clinical trials that treated PCOS using an insulin-sensitizing drug, safely used for years to treat diabetes. The test results were impressive, regardless of whether or not the women had high blood sugar levels. A significant percentage had menstruation restored. Several became pregnant, which seemed to indicate that the drug worked by restoring ovulation. That was exactly what I had been seeking!

My doctor disagreed with me. She said I shouldn't worry so much about PCOS. She thought I should take the hormone pills but, if I didn't want to, I didn't have to do anything. Most women don't treat the condition, because they don't even know they have it. She went on to say that I had far more serious medical problems to worry about. This wasn't reassuring—in fact it made me angry. I went to all this trouble over the last six months because she

Drawing Down the Moon, Joan Bredin-Price, 1992





said I could have normal periods again. Being infertile and inducing a fake period every three months isn't normal. I felt I had been misled. So I requested a referral to a specialist in ovulation—a reproductive endocrinologist.

When I first met with the endocrinologist, he immediately recommended birth control pills. I laughed and asked if he needed a few minutes to look at my medical records. No doctor would prescribe birth control pills for someone with my medical history. He said the alternative was to take a progestin like Provera. This was sounding all too familiar. I explained, once again, that my goal is restoring ovulation and fertility, without necessarily wanting to get pregnant. Progestins don't do that, and they may pose a breast cancer risk.

Then I mentioned the diabetes drug, Glucophage (also known as Metformin). I explained that it has recently been shown to restore ovulation in some women with PCOS. I added that it seemed like a good option for me, since I tend to have elevated blood sugar levels. He was already aware of the "off label" use of Glucophage to treat PCOS but, for some reason, didn't see fit to mention it as an option. However, since I refused to take hormones, he gave me the prescription I wanted. In my record he noted that, for some reason, I was extremely opposed to hormone treatment. So "they" decided to put me on Glucophage!

After five months with no results I started to get worried. I had read that if Glucophage doesn't produce a period after six months, it never will. I asked the endocrinologists what other drugs they would recommend to try restoring my ovulatory cycle if this treatment failed. They said that there was nothing else—if Glucophage didn't work I was out of luck. I

cried for days after that. Then, a week later, my long lost "friend" started visiting again! It took two years of extreme unhappiness, frustration, and persistence to reach my goal. But it was worth it. If I had trusted the "experts" I wouldn't be doing as well as I am now.

When I started taking Glucophage, almost a year ago, most of my health problems started to disappear. I don't think it's a coincidence. Diet and exercise never produced any significant results for me before. Now, I have lost 60 pounds, my blood sugar levels are normal, and I no longer need to take blood pressure medications. It appears I really did have a chemical imbalance all these years—in my metabolic system!

I suppose the moral of the story is that we can't rely on anyone but ourselves to safeguard our health and well-being. Our healing journeys may not be as fast or easy as we'd like, but without some effort it's unlikely that we will ever reach our destinations. We shouldn't be afraid to ask for help and guidance, but the directions we get may not lead us onto the right path. Trust your inner compass. Self-empowerment has the power to heal. Use that power! ▼

#### For more information about PCOS:

- An Excellent Article: [www.bebeyond.com/LearnEnglish/DailyReadings/Science1/PCOS.htm](http://www.bebeyond.com/LearnEnglish/DailyReadings/Science1/PCOS.htm)
- Treatment Options: [www.pcos.freesevers.com/treatment.html](http://www.pcos.freesevers.com/treatment.html)
- Medline Plus: [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000369.htm](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000369.htm)
- FAQs: [www.inciid.org/faq/pcos.html](http://www.inciid.org/faq/pcos.html)
- Support Group: [www.soulcysters.org](http://www.soulcysters.org)

\* The title of this article quotes a lyric from the song "Silence is Golden," by Garbage.

## GLBT Parenting Journey Group

The Family Center, an organization committed to all families, will be offering a 12-week Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Parenting Journey group beginning in late fall 2003. The GLBT Parenting Journey will be facilitated by Jassy Timberlake and Joe Winn, who will support and encourage GLBT parents to care for themselves, and each other, while participating in a series of experiential exercises and discussion. The GLBT Parenting Journey curriculum, with weekly sessions of 2 hours, takes place around a meal table in a warm and nurturing environment. Parenting Journey is a strengths-based program, focusing on the strengths, resources and skills that parents already have at their disposal and helps parents to build on those resources by increasing their awareness of the messages they received from their own families of origin. The Family Center accepts most forms of insurance. However, the self-pay fee for each session is \$20 and includes the cost of the meal. If there is enough demand, childcare may be offered for children between the ages of 4 and 14 years of age. Childcare is provided on the premises and will cost \$5.00 per family and includes the cost of a meal for each child. Contact either Jassy or Joe at 617-628-8815.

## Bisexual Resource Guide Calls For Submissions

**E**normous changes are underway for the next edition of the *Bisexual Resource Guide*. More writing, more stories, YOUR stories! The editor is seeking short submissions (up to 250 words) on the following topics:

- \* Why Bi? (calling myself bisexual)
- \* What Do Bisexuals Want: The Bisexual Agenda
- \* Coming Out as Bisexual
- \* Living My Bisexual Life
- \* Bisexuals in Relationships
- \* Looking at the World Through Bisexual Eyes/ A Bi Perspective
- \* Bi Families
- \* Bi Activism
- \* Crossing Categories (bi, trans, etc.): communicating the complexity of occupying simultaneous both/and positions.

All styles of writing are welcome: prose, poetry, essays, personal stories, cartoons, etc. Submissions should be accompanied by a photo or drawing of the author (and family, if appropriate to the subject) and a one or two sentence bio, as well as the author's contact information.

You are welcome to submit more than one essay. Unused essays can not be returned but will not be used without your permission for any other purpose. If your essay is used, you will be sent a copy of the book when it is completed. If English is not your native language, you can write in your native language, and we will have it translated.

Deadline: October 31, 2003. Send your submissions to: Robyn Ochs, 79 Eastland Road, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130 USA, or via e-mail to [booking@robynochs.com](mailto:booking@robynochs.com). ▼



## Transcending Boundaries 2003

October 24-26 the third annual Transcending Boundaries conference will take place on the campus of UMASS/Amherst. Linking the bi, trans and intersex communities, the conference will have an array of workshops, keynote speakers, opportunities to socialize and have fun! Registration is \$55. Contact Alice at 860-956-9299 or Lisa at r27@attbi.com for more information.

## Out to Dance!

OUT to Dance! warmly welcomes folks of any age, race, sexual orientation, body size or level of dance ability to a new fall schedule of Latin, Swing and Ballroom Dance Classes. Classes are held at the West Roxbury School of Dance and in Coolidge Corner in Brookline. For information about class schedules go to [www.outtodance.com](http://www.outtodance.com) or call Liz Nania at 617-363-0029 or e-mail [liz@outtodance.com](mailto:liz@outtodance.com).

## Compassion from page 1

worked with. At first I denied it to myself. I contained my feelings for him by directing anger towards his kindness. But once I saw the hurt I had bestowed upon him, I could not deny the attraction and I expressed to him my desire to spend time with him outside of work. Immediately, we became lovers. He accepted that I was a lesbian - never questioned it. I loved and needed that. He honored my fear of public displays of affection, the result of my having been socialized lesbian in an era in which public "outness" could result in violence. It was me, not he, who questioned my sexuality. Was I not a lesbian? Had my life been a lie up until now? Was I really straight? Could "bisexuality" mean something more than a red flag when a previously married woman announced this status to me? Could I be... bisexual?

I remember that Monday night that I drove to group therapy. I cried most of the way knowing that I would need to leave the group because of my involvement with a man. With the excitement and joy I felt when I wrapped my hand around his hard cock, or when I felt him enter me, I could not call myself lesbian any longer.

The group protocol consisted of a once around "check in" where each member gave a brief status of how they were doing and would

ask for time if they had something they wanted to discuss or work on in the group that evening. I asked for time. When it came to my turn, I got straight to the point. "I'm dating a man and don't think you want me in the group any longer" I proclaimed. "I understand if that's the way you feel," I said while staring at the carpet in the center of the circle. The silence was deafening, and I expected one of the therapists to intervene with some directive language as they often did when the group needed a push. I looked up at the therapists and to my surprise found them simply gazing at me. I then turned to the group members, looking at each of them individually until finally someone spoke. "I don't want you to leave the group," she said. "Me either," said another. "It doesn't matter that you are seeing a man, you are part of this group," chimed in another. With tears running down my cheeks, I was ensconced in the love of my group members. The therapists did not respond. Their binary world was just turned upside down. I continued in this group for another year or so.

Despite the various forms of body-work, astrology, crystal healing, energy work and all of the other healing modalities that have found their way into my life, the compassion that my lesbian group members showed me that evening has been one of the most powerful healing experiences of my life. Their open hearts allowed me to push past my own judgment and find my way to self-acceptance. Blessed be. ▽

## CD Review: *Bi The People*, Violent Yodel Records, 2003. Reviewed by Ellyn Ruthstrom

**D**id you ever think there would be a compilation CD of bisexual artists? I know I didn't. But the fabulous Skott Freedman and Violent Yodel Records makes it a reality with the October 21st release of *Bi The People*. The CD includes 16 songs by bisexual artists and their friends and the variety of styles make it great to throw on for many different moods.

The first time I put the CD on I wasn't sure what to expect. I recognized Laura Love, Melissa Ferrick, Skott Freedman and Tom Robinson easily but then I'd hear something new and really good and have to go search for the cover to see who it was. *Bi the People* has introduced me to some new artists that I will definitely keep an eye out for.

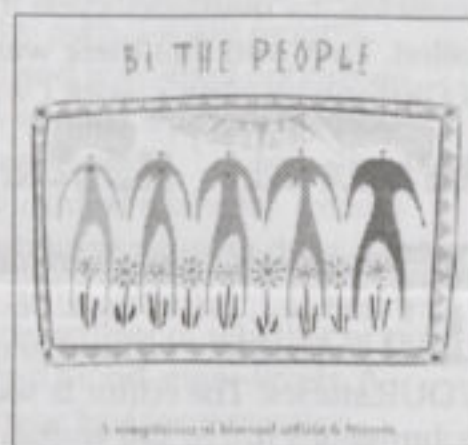
Bitch and Animal rap on Eminem's misogyny and homophobia in "Secret Candy": "Hey, Eminem, why don't you lead the fucking pride parade?/And show the queers you ain't afraid/To take it in the rear/From Holly Near or Brittany Spear."

Erin Hamilton's "I Got the Music in Me"

and Jim Verraros's "I Want You" offer a couple of dance tunes that could be on any fun dance mix. At first thinking it was Ani DiFranco (and then surprised

that Ani's not on it at all) I was very drawn to Rachael Sage's "What If." Leslie Nuchow, Gregory Douglass, Magdalen Hsu-Li, and Laya Fisher are all new to me and each contributes great songs to the collection.

Generally, it's fun music, great voices and a chance to support the artistic bi community. Skott Freedman is really getting out there for us, performing on campuses, bi conferences, and pride events, and now producing this CD. A great holiday gift for anyone who'd like to be turned on to some up and coming artists. You can reserve your copy before the release date on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com). ▽





## Society from page 1

sations and dreams associated with it), I certainly had my share of narrow-mindedness and bias. However, post-"moment" segued quite perceptibly from limited acceptance of others, to an almost immediate widening of the net. After all, since I had to accept my own nature (one contrary to the popular norm)—it became a matter of anti-hypocrisy and humility to include various and sundry other misfits and outcasts into my web of acceptance.

Acknowledging and owning my bisexual nature helped me heal the rifts created by socialization that constantly seek to separate us from each other by a variety of labels, stereotypes, media manipulations, encouraged assumptions, confusions, etc. Of course I have not achieved perfect enlightenment in this arena—in fact, the older I get, the more honest I am with my lingering biases, of which quite a few persist. And, I must say, new, surprising biases are always popping up, sort of like those spring-board clown targets at a carnival shooting booth, instantaneously replacing biases that I've managed to deconstruct and banish.

But bias-busting is sort of like being a superhero/shaman/witch. Sometimes you have to put on a special costume, replete with accompanying rituals, and psyche yourself up to attack it, brandishing your special power until nothing remains of the bias but a puddle of water. Later, with one's costume in the washing machine, feet resting on the velvet footstool by the warm fire, one can muse over the origins and ridiculousness of the bias, and how our lovely capitalistic, hierarchical society benefits by its persistence. And certainly, this whole scenario is moot if you can't even identify the bias. I have been fortunate enough to find myself surrounded by people from different walks of life, and have encountered many opportunities (i.e. diversity committees

and anti-oppression conferences) to keep this process on the radar.

It's interesting to me that this little essay should center around bias-breaking as a path to healing. I know that right now in my life, different organizations I am involved with also have this process on the forefront to their own growth and healing. Chicken and egg as to where bias-busting first started—probably synergy is a better term. Illuminating my own process of identifying, confronting, and breaking free from bias (begun over a decade ago when I first self-identified as bi), will hopefully impact the macrocosmic process.

On a side note, as a therapist, I must continually guard against self-disclosure to my

clients, assessing my motivations (helpfulness vs. self-indulgence). In my particular clinical environment, I choose to reveal very little about myself verbally, although I have "GLBTQ" welcoming signage and paraphernalia present, visible to the searching eye. Although it is not appropriate to "come out" as bisexual to my clients, I certainly allow my counseling to be informed by my perspective, using my own experiences

as a source of strength and knowledge for healing. And, consequently, as my clients heal themselves, ideally feeling bathed in acceptance and unconditional positive regard, I continue to heal from the ills of socialization through the growth I witness and the connection we have made.

"That day. I thought of all of us in the room, not only the textures of our infirmities, but of what had been stolen from us and broken. There was an intelligence. There were other ways of knowing which included rituals and ceremonies. We had great knowledge of plants, minerals, and medicines. American Indians who'd survived tens of thousands of years witnessed the great destruction of our knowledge systems, which included knowledge of ecosystems. All of us in that room knew that western medicine, even with its best powers, could not heal us. But how much we want healing, the true wholeness of being in our place, in the world. Everyone of us knew it, and we knew, too, that we were powerless..."

Linda Hogan

*The Woman Who Watches Over the World*

## Journal of Bisexuality: Special Issue

Additional contributors are sought for a special issue of the Journal of Bisexuality on affirmative counseling and psychotherapy with bisexual women and bisexual men, edited by Ron Fox. This volume will be published simultaneously as a special journal issue and as a book by Haworth Press. This volume will be the first focusing specifically on counseling and psychotherapy with bisexual women and bisexual men and will include articles on individual therapy, couples counseling, therapy and support groups for bisexual people, working with clients on coming out concerns and issues of internalized homophobia and biphobia, and much more. A 500-word abstract is required by October 15, 2003. A first draft of the manuscript will be due by February 1, 2004, and final manuscripts of those selected by the editor will be due by June 1, 2004. The volume will be published in December 2004.

Inquiries are welcomed by the editor, and submission guidelines are available via e-mail from: [ronfox@ronfoxphd.com](mailto:ronfox@ronfoxphd.com) or by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Ron Fox, Ph.D., P.O. Box 14306, San Francisco, CA 94114-0306.

Visit BBWN online at:  
**[biresource.org/bbwn](http://biresource.org/bbwn)**  
for a calendar listing of local  
bisexual events.



## Speak Out: A Viewpoint Writing Workshop With Kathryn Casa

In the month following the 9/11 attacks, women wrote only 8% of the op-eds for *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *USA Today*. In this intensive weekend workshop, you'll learn how to write more effective op-eds, letters to the editor, opinion columns, and other forms of nonfiction viewpoint writing. Editor Kathryn Casa leads the workshop on November 15 and 16. Plus, you'll strategize and learn about how to find women-friendly markets for your work, and how to break into markets that need your point of view. At the end of the weekend, you will have the option to join with your fellow workshopers to become an ongoing support and advocacy group for each other's writing. To apply, please submit a 250-500 word statement about why you're interested in taking the workshop. For more information, contact the Center for New Words at 617-876-5310 or [newwords@theworld.com](mailto:newwords@theworld.com).

## The North American Conference on Bisexuality: Celebrating Sexual and Gender Diversity

By Carla Imperial

**T**he 2003 North American Conference on Bisexuality was held this past August 21-24 in San Diego. This was the second North American Conference, put together by Fritz Klein, Richard Woulfe, and a large committee of volunteers. The result was a weekend of diverse topics, presenters, entertainers, and an extremely well-attended gathering.

The conference boasted at least ten accomplished plenary speakers, including our very own Robyn Ochs as the conference's closing keynote speaker. Other speakers included Susan Davis, California's 53rd District's Congresswoman; Gloria Careaga Perez, a leader in Mexico's LGBT movement; Joan Garry, the executive director of GLAAD; and several other renowned speakers. The conference also offered four very exciting pre-conference institutes: a Bi-Health Summit, Bi-Youth, Bi-People of Color, and an Erotic Touch seminar. The pre-conference institutes provided an opportunity to focus in depth on one of these topics, working with panels of experts.

Throughout the weekend, over seventy presenters led workshops spanning eight different topic tracks: Activism and Organizing; Gender; Health; Media/Culture/Film; Relationships and Families; Research and Theory; Sexuality; Spirituality and Personal Growth. The workshops were incredibly diverse, including topics such as Campus Bi Organizing; Fluid Genders, Orientations, and the Transmale Experience; Fertility 101; Reel Bisexuals (taught by Boston Biversity member, Wayne Bryant); My Big Bi Triad Wedding; Current Research on Bisexuality; I Used To Be A Lesbian; Christianity and Bisexuality; and a variety of other topics covering all interest areas.

After a full day of learning and sharing, we sat down to buffet dinners and evenings of first class entertainment. There was an open-mic arena where attendees could spontaneously offer their talents and a dance where we could release all of our bi-energy. On the last evening we were honored by the comedy of Rob Yaeger, and the amazing music of Magdalen Hsu-Li and Skott Freedman.

Overall, the conference was a wonderful success and an opportunity to learn and open our minds in ways beyond imagination. For me, the conference was a welcomed jolt. This was my first bisexual conference, and I decided

to go mainly to support and finally be able to see my friend Robyn do her "speaking thang." I had no other expectations and no desire to become an activist. However, I was gently reminded throughout the conference how beautiful and diverse we all are, and I learned, especially through Robyn's closing words, how important even the smallest gesture of activism is to help bring about change.

For years, I had stopped correcting people when they assumed I am a lesbian because I'm in a same-sex relationship. Since the conference, I'm saying, "Hello, I'm bi." ▼

## KD&D Performing in Cambridge



On November 7-8, Kelley Donovan & Dancers will present *Things That Go Unsaid*, a program of contemporary dance investigating community, spirituality and transformation, exploring the unique energy of

movement, and gestural vocabulary as a non-verbal form of communication. Blended gestures combine movement that communicates delicate subtle emotions difficult to express in words.

Kelley Donovan has been presenting choreography in the Boston area since 1990 and has performed work by Marcus Schulkind, Spencer/Colton, Liz Lerman and Ann Carlson. Kelley Donovan and Dancers, formed in 1997, has performed in venues around the Boston area, including: Central Square Worlds Fair, The Actors Workshop, Club Passim, Squawk Coffeehouse, Lesley College. Kelley studied choreography with Mark Morris, Bessie Schönberg, Deborah Jowitt and received a B.A. from Bradford College in 1989.

*Things that Go Unsaid* will be presented both nights at 8 p.m. at Green Street Studios, 185 Green St., Central Square, Cambridge, Massachusetts, \$15, General Admission, \$12 for Student/Seniors. Call 781-321-6188 for information or visit [web.mit.edu/kdonovan/www](http://web.mit.edu/kdonovan/www).





## CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

### October 27 ♦ Monday

**Mixed Gender Poly Support Group**, 6:30-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. This group is intended as a supportive environment to talk about poly-related issues in your life, to ask questions, or just to hear what other people have to say.

### November 2 ♦ Sunday

**BBWN Bowling**, noon, at Lanes and Games on Rt. 2 in Cambridge. The season has begun! Come and bowl a few strings and then we'll head to a local eatery for a late lunch. Contact Ellyn so she'll know how many people are coming, 617-623-5535 or nellythrustmor@aol.com.



**Crafty Day** at Sheeri's in Watertown, 1-4 p.m. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center, bring your own art or craft and spend some time working on it in a fun environment, or just watch and be an inspiration. Contact Sheeri at awfief@cs.brandeis.edu or 857-205-9786.

### November 4 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Different Genders, Different Relationships." See October 7th.

### November 5 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual**, 7-8:45 p.m. See October 1st.

### November 9 ♦ Sunday

**BBWN Poetic Potluck at Fennel's** in Brookline's Coolidge Corner, Noon-3 p.m. Please bring both a dish and a poem you love, to share. When you RSVP, please post the dish you are bringing so we can get a good variety. RSVP to coachgold@aol.com.

### November 11 ♦ Tuesday

**Queer Married Women's Discussion Group**, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. See October 14th.

### November 12 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting**, 6:30-8:30 p.m. See October 8th.

### November 14 ♦ Friday

**BiWomen Submissions Deadline**. This issue's theme is "Traveling Bi." See page 2 for more ideas. Send submissions to: *BiWomen*, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA, 02140 or e-mail to nellythrustmor@aol.com.

### November 16 ♦ Sunday

**Crafty Day** at Sheeri's in Watertown, 1-4 p.m. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center, bring your own art or craft and spend some time working on it in a fun environment, or just watch and be an inspiration. Contact Sheeri at awfief@cs.brandeis.edu or 857-205-9786.

### November 18 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Building a Relationship: Communication, Intimacy, Staying Friends After Dating." See October 7th.

### November 20 ♦ Thursday

**Coming Out as Bisexual**, 7-9 p.m. See October 1st.

### November 15 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Brunch** at Doyle's in Jamaica Plain, 11:30 a.m. The address is 3484 Washington Street, between the Green Street and Forest Hills stops on the Orange Line.

### November 24 ♦ Monday

**Mixed Gender Poly Support Group**, 6:30-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. See October 27th.

### November 25 ♦ Tuesday

**BiWomen mailing**, 7-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center. Can you say label, stuff, and seal? Join us. Socialize during and after.

### November 30 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch**, 1 p.m. Veggie Planet is popular and centrally located so we're doing it again. Veggie Planet is located at 47 Palmer Street (at Club Passim) in Harvard Square, Cambridge. It's vegetarian food. T Stop is Harvard Square on the Red Line.



## Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

### Ongoing Events

#### Wednesdays:

**Gendertalk**, 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

### Women's Club Nights

#### Every Third Saturday:

**Glitter Switch: Drag/Karaoke and dancing** at Hollywood KTV, 41 Essex Street, Chinatown T, Boston. 10 p.m.-2 a.m. \$10 cover.

**Sundays: Queer night**, 9 p.m.-1 a.m., the Milky Way, 403 Centre St, Jamaica Plain. DJ and dance floor.

**Thursdays: Dyke Night** at the Midway Cafe, 3496 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain. Pool table 8-10, DJ with dancing 10-2.



### SUBSCRIPTION RATE

for *BiWomen*  
(sliding scale)

- \_\_\_ \$0-\$20 (pay what you can)
- \_\_\_ \$20-\$30 (suggested)
- \_\_\_ \$30-\$100 Extra Special Donor
- \_\_\_ Renewal
- \_\_\_ New Subscriber

**BiWomen wants you!!!**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140



## The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

## Ongoing Events

### 1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

**Bi Women's Rap**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

### 2nd Tuesdays:

**Married Bi Women's Discussion Group**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

### First Wednesdays, Third Thursdays:

**NEW DAY: Coming Out as Bisexual**, 7-9 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

# CALENDAR

## October 1 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual**, 7-8:45 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

## October 6 ♦ Monday

**Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group**, 7-8:45 p.m. at NEW LOCATION: The Diesel Cafe, 257 Elm St., Somerville. The group discusses issues relevant to women in the poly community, especially those of interest to queer women. It ranges from social chzattting to more in-depth discussions, depending on what people want to talk about each month. All self-identified women are welcome! Questions to Donna at dalbino83@excite.com.

## October 7 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Topic: "Marriage: How Can We Redefine Marriage? Is it Something to Avoid?" Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

## October 8 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting**, 6:30-8:30 p.m. All bi community members welcome to attend. New board members are needed. Stop by and see first-hand what it's all about. The meeting is on the 4th floor of the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. in Back Bay.

## October 12 ♦ Sunday

**BBWN Bike Ride**, 1:30 p.m. Get together and ride along the Minuteman Bike Path from Arlington to Bedford. Contact Deb Morley for details at 781-777-1054 or debmo@comcast.net.

## October 14 ♦ Tuesday

**Queer Married Women's Discussion Group**, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. The group is facilitated by Denise Garrow-Pruitt who can be contacted at dgarrow@rcn.com. Call 617-354-8807 for directions.

## October 16 ♦ Thursday

**Coming Out as Bisexual**, 7-9 p.m. October 1st.

## October 18 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Brunch**, 11:30 a.m. A favorite brunch spot, Johnny D's on Holland St. in Davis Square in Somerville always draws the biggest bi brunch crowd. Nearest T is Davis Square on the Red Line.

**Biversity Bike Ride**, right after the brunch. Weather permitting, we'll take the Minuteman Bikeway from Davis Square out to Lexington, where we'll switch to the Battle Road Trail and continue to the North Bridge in Concord. For more info, call Mike 617-625-7428.

## October 19 ♦ Sunday

**BRC Crafty Day at Spontaneous Celebrations**, 1-4 p.m. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center, bring your own art or craft and spend some time working on it in a fun environment, or just watch and be an inspiration. Contact Sheeri at awfief@cs.brandeis.edu or 857-205-9786.

## October 21 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "I First Knew I Was Bi When....." See October 7th.

## October 24-26 ♦ Friday-Sunday

**Transcending Boundaries Conference**, co-sponsored by Biversity Boston, the third annual conference is being held at the UMASS/Amherst campus. Call 866-298-7690 or visit [www.transcendingboundaries.org](http://www.transcendingboundaries.org) for information.

## October 26 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch**, 1:00 p.m. Let's try some place new! Today's brunch will be at Grasshopper, 1 North Beacon St. in Allston. Grasshopper features Asian vegetarian food. #64 bus from Central Square, #66 from Harvard Square, #57 from Kenmore or Green Line B to the Allston Street stop.

**Bisexual People of Color Gathering**, 4-6 p.m. This time we'll go with the input of interested people that are going to attend. A video party, restaurant, or what? Whether you are Asian, Latino, Native American, African American, East Asian, Caribbean, biracial or of mixed heritage, all diverse ethnicities and gender identities are welcome. Call BRC office or John at 617-983-8788 or binaturist2@eudoramail.com with BiPOC in the subject line.

## Support BBWN with Your Used Books, CDs, VHS tapes, and DVDs!

Long-time member Gail Zacharias is helping BBWN with fundraising by listing the used books, etc on various online channels. 40% of the sale price will be donated to BBWN. If you have books to donate, please bring them to the BRC office, or contact Robyn (ochs@bi.org, 617-413-2717) to arrange for book transfer.

The books must be in reasonably good shape—in particular, all pages must be present and readable (some highlighting and underlining is ok if it doesn't obscure the text), and the cover must be present and firmly attached to the pages (it's ok for the dust jacket of a hardcover to be missing). And the books mustn't be smelly (e.g. musty or smoky), since Gail will be storing them in her home!

**CALENDAR** continues on page 11



Happy 20th  
Birthday, BBWN!

# BiWomen

The Newsletter of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network

December/January 2004  
Vol. 21, No. 6

## Bisexual Boston

### A Whirlwind of Bi Activities:

#### One Bostonian's "Bi-o"

By Linda Blair

Being "Bi in Boston" has been just the ticket for me. I remember when I first realized how lucky I was to be coming out as bisexual in one of the most happening bi cities in the world. I could hardly believe my good fortune! It was eleven years ago. I was twenty-seven years old and sitting in my room reading *Bi Any Other Name*, which, you guessed it, I'd found in the "gay and lesbian" section at a mainstream bookstore. The back of the book had a list of resources and I was ecstatic to see the Bisexual Resource Center, Biversity Boston, and the Boston Bisexual Women's Network listed in it. It just so happened that I was living in a city where there was not one, not two, but count 'em, three, bisexual organizations! Wow! Like many of us, I'd feared I was the only one. Well, my luck was changing.

Late in the evening, past 10 o'clock at least, I would call the info line listed for the Bisexual Resource Center. I made it a point never to call during the day or any time I thought someone might answer. I wasn't ready for that yet. Listening to the outgoing messages listing the current calendar of events, I was excited, and a little scared, to hear that there were a myriad of activities I could participate in, if I could muster the courage: Saturday brunch at Ryles, Sunday brunch at Buddha's Delight, coffee and music at the (now defunct) Casual Cup; dinner and a movie at the Kendall Cafe and Theater; a day trip to Singing Beach in Manchester-By-The Sea (don't forget a towel and sunscreen); apple picking, skinny-dipping in Vermont, and, last but not least, the short-lived but much loved "scandalously late sushi" (11 p.m.—this is still Boston after all!).

Wow! What was a "scared-but-ready" emerging bisexual to do? Well, first I decided to dip my big toe in, just to test the water, at a BBWN newsletter mailing at Robyn's house. That's the night I met my first girlfriend! Then I tried a brunch at the S & S

**Whirlwind** continues on page 4



Here is almost a dozen of the two dozen bisexual women Lucy Lizard says live in Boston. Hmmmm, then who is reading all those newsletters we send out?

### Bisexual Bonanza: Why I Like Living in Boston

By Lucy Lizard

(Warning: this article contains sarcasm)

If you have ever identified as bisexual, you might have noticed just a tiny bit of suspicion directed at you from some gays and lesbians. Perhaps you know of a long-time lesbian who has struggled hard against sexism and helped to define "women's space" in her community (which is much needed and welcomed). What does it mean, then, for a fine woman like yourself who honors every tenet of feminism, who loves women down into the deepest part of their... souls, but who also loves men? I'm not talking men who have confederate flags on their pickup trucks, I'm talking sensitive, loving men who listen.

**Bonanza** continues on page 5

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## Volunteers of the Month

Gail Zacharias

Robyn Ochs

Deb Morley

Wayne Bryant

Katrina

Fennel

Marcia Diehl

Linda Blair

And many more  
fabulous people!  
You know who  
you are!

*BiWomen* is published bi-monthly.

**Editor:**

Ellyn Ruthstrom

**Printed on  
recycled paper**

*The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.*

## B is for Boston and Bisexual

I knew I was bi a number of years before I originally moved to Boston in 1987, but I was in a committed relationship with a man at the time and didn't venture to explore what that meant to me. A close friend of mine started attending the Tuesday night Bi Rap at the Cambridge Women's Center and after two meetings ended up in bed with two other rappers in her first threesome (I can't assure all of you such success!). I can't imagine why I didn't start attending—immediately.

In 1994, I moved back to Boston and one of the first things I did was drop into the Bi Raps. At that time Bi Rap was held every Tuesday and it was packed out every week, with 12-20 women filling every available space. I started going in the summer, and commonly, after Rap was over, a large portion of the group would head down to the open-air Au Bon Pain in Harvard Square and continue "rapping" for a few more hours. People held parties, a gang would play pool at "Ladies Night," go dancing at the latest women's night. It was an incredible heyday and I met friends during that first six months that are still some of my closest friends in Boston.

In the nine years I've been a part of Boston's bi community I have met hundreds of other bi women (don't let Lucy Lizard's sarcasm fool you—we are everywhere) in Boston as well as in other communities. I wish that all the women I've met at Bi Rap and at BBWN brunches became involved in the community and got out of it as much as I do, but for whatever reason they all don't.

Many find a place for themselves in the lesbian community, others drop in and out, and still others find they don't need or want a network to live the way they want to live. But I do know that many do find what they are looking for and I count myself among them. I've definitely gone through phases of being more involved and less involved in various parts of the community, but I can't imagine a time that I could live in Boston and not be a part of our vibrant tribe.

Ellyn Ruthstrom

## NEXT IN *BiWOMEN*

The *BiWomen* theme for  
February/March is:

### What Are You Reading?

Time to share what you've been reading lately. What kinds of books do you like to read? What's your favorite bi book? Is there such a thing as a bi book anyway? Review a book. Write about how much you love books or what books changed your life.

*Deadline: January 16, 2004*

## FUTURE ISSUES

### April/May

*Lesbians and Bisexual Women:  
Can We Talk?*

Send your suggestions for future topics to  
[nellythrustmor@aol.com](mailto:nellythrustmor@aol.com)

## PLEASE SUBMIT TO *BiWOMEN* !

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,  
black-and-white art, news, and views to:

*BiWomen*

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to

[NellyThrustmor@aol.com](mailto:NellyThrustmor@aol.com)

***If you do not want your name  
published, please tell us.***

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# Eighth International Conference on Bisexuality Set for Minneapolis in 2004

**T**he 8th International Conference on Bisexuality is to be held at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis August 5-8, 2004. Organizers recently announced their pre-registration costs and encouraged bi activists to start making their plans to attend.

At the door, conference registration will be \$60, however, until February 1st, 2004, there is an early registration discount price of \$45. There are also three optional activities that are separate charges. Entertainment will cost an additional \$15, breakfast Sunday morning at a nearby hotel will cost \$15, and there will be a conference banquet at the same hotel for \$30. Until February 1st, the complete package for the registration, the two meals, and entertainment will be \$90, and after that date it will be \$110.

For professionals seeking CEUs, there is a different fee structure. Registration is \$200, including both meals and entertainment. The

planning committee is also planning to create a scholarship program, details of which will be announced.

The 8th International Conference on Bisexuality is a project of the Bisexual Organizing Project, a bisexual advocacy group based in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, and the Bisexual Foundation of San Diego, with the support of the University of Minnesota's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Program Office. For more information or to register, visit [www.8icb.org](http://www.8icb.org), or call 612-825-4400. 

## Letters to the Editor

Dear BBWN,

Some good bi news. Yesterday, I received a Community Service Recognition Award "for contributing to the community while helping to overcome oppression & promoting wellness for LGBT People." It was for co-founding the Unitarian Universalist Bisexual Network and it was awarded at the Overcoming Oppression: Promoting Wellness for BGLT people, a statewide mental health conference put on by Community Counseling, USM, NASW, ME Dept. of Behavioral & Developmental Services, and Kids First Center Portland.

As far as I know, this was the first time a bisexual person has received an award for bisexual activism in Maine. We should all thank Frank Brooks for having the courage to put through an award to an out bisexual. I'm sure he got a lot of flack for supporting us.

Alan Hamilton received a similar award for co-founding the Bisexual Resource Center. Yay! Incidentally, Alan Hamilton and I gave a workshop on promoting bisexual wellness at this conference, and I was the bi panelist for a panel on BGL aging. That's more representation than bis have ever had at a Maine mental health conference.

Bobbi Keppel

*Congratulations Bobbi and Alan!!!*

Hi, Women of BBWN,

Enclosed is a check for a subscription to the BiWomen newsletter. Thank you very much—you rock!

Sincerely,  
J.F.



*Here's a photo of BBWN member Robyn Ochs that was supposed to go in the last issue because Robyn was the keynote speaker at the North American Conference on Bisexuality in San Diego in August. Do you think she'll be in Minneapolis next August for 8ICB? You should be too!*

## Brunch Coordinator Wants You to Host!

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the brunch coordinator, so please contact her at [dgm@ias.ga.unc.edu](mailto:dgm@ias.ga.unc.edu) if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! And check out the calendar on pages 11-12 for the brunches and other activities coming up in January. Hope you can join us.



## Beyond Binary

Beyond Binary is a group for folks outside, blurring, and/or expanding the gender binary system. It's for everyone who views gender as having more than two options and for those who feel that no one has a right to put a limit on their gender. Do you prefer to not always identify as a "man" or a "woman"; see yourself as outside of the gender boxes; get frustrated by the world's misjudgment of your gender; feel restricted by labels, categories, and pronouns? Beyond Binary welcome all ages, all anatomies, all genders, all hormone levels, all ways of expressing yourself. Meeting the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month from 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. at Boston GLASS, 93 Massachusetts Avenue, 3rd floor, in the Back Bay neighborhood of Boston. Contact Taryn at 617-304-2002 or [genderqueer24@hotmail.com](mailto:genderqueer24@hotmail.com) for more information.

## Whirlwind from page 1

Deli, where I distinctly remember one veteran bisexual activist telling me that he could give me referrals for good bi-positive therapists, in case, like many folks, I was feeling depressed about coming out. Depressed? No, I assured him, I'd never felt better in my life! Boston was a cornucopia of bi activities, and I was hungry.

Because I lived in Boston, this hotbed of bisexual activism, my coming out was as much a social experience as it was a sexual experience. I'd been an awkward, unpopular kid who'd grown up to be a fairly reclusive adult. But suddenly I was not an isolated individual anymore, I was a welcome addition to a vibrant bisexual community that was brimming with activity. After testing the water briefly, I was ready to dive in head first. Soon my social calendar runneth over with by Biversity Boston and BBWN activities. In addition to the bike rides, potlucks, walks in the park, and nights on the town, there was a weekly (now biweekly) Bi Women's Rap Group that met on Tuesday nights at the Cambridge Women's Center. Needless to say, I went virtually every Tuesday night. On top of all this I had something else I'd always wanted: a girlfriend. Life was good.

In addition to all the fun and games, there was a sprinkling of political activism here and there to join in on. I helped to tie-dye "bi pride" armbands for the April 25, 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation, then drove down to DC for the march, which, if I remember correctly, my then girlfriend and I decided to skip. I guess I was still too excited to settle down for much political activism at the time.

Not to worry, just two months later I went to my first "real" Boston Pride March. I'd gone to the previous two as a solo observer, but this time I marched proudly as part of the bisexual contingent! Then the following June there was the "Stonewall 25 March on the United Nations to Affirm the Human Rights of Lesbian and Gay People" in New York City. Good thing we had our "bi pride" armbands and t-shirts to remind everyone that it wasn't only

lesbian and gay people whose human rights needed affirming!

Pretty soon I was ready to add in some bi activist "work" to my steady diet of bi social events. At the time, the Boston bi community was humming with activism. There was plenty to do so I rolled up my sleeves and got cracking. I started co-editing *BiWomen*, first with top-notch graphic designer Kathleen Hepburn and later with crackerjack writer and editor Debbie Block-Schwenk. Editing the newsletter every other month kept me anchored in the heart of the bisexual community and surrounded by exhilarating bisexual women's energy for the five years from late 1993 - 1998. A few months after I started working on *BiWomen*, my roommate Laura encouraged me to join the board of the Bisexual Resource Center. Years later as board president, I had the pleasure of delivering the welcoming speech to nearly 1,000 bi and bi-friendly people from all over the world who flocked to Boston for the Fifth International Bisexual Conference (IBC5), April 3-5, 1998 at Harvard University.

I know there are few, if any, places other than Boston where I could have truly immersed myself in a vibrant, fun-loving yet hard-working bisexual community like this one. It's been an amazing experience that I will always be grateful for.

About five years ago I made a conscious decision to surface from my deep immersion in bi activities. Since then I've become involved in the GLBT partner dancing community, wider GLBT political activities (where bi invisibility is still all too prevalent), and partnered in a long-term relationship that deserves a lot of my time and energy.



Former *BiWomen* co-editors Debbie Block-Schwenk and Linda Blair celebrate at the 2002 Boston Pride March.



It's great to be doing new and different things with my time, but I haven't forgotten where my "roots" are. I try to keep my hand in some things bi, catching a Biversity or BBWN brunch every now and again, writing an article like this one on the rare occasion when the spirit moves me, and facilitating the Coming Out as Bisexual Support Group, which meets on the first Wednesday and the third Thursday of each month from 7-8:30 pm at the Boston Living Center.

Facilitating the Coming Out Group always helps to remind me of how important it is to keep this community together—a community that was there for me when I needed it and that I want to be there for when it needs me. Although there seems to be a little less going on these days than there once was, there's still plenty of avenues for anyone who's bi in Boston to meet, greet and get to know one another, which for me at least, has been a major life-enhancing experience. ▼

## Bi Boston

### Bi Rap

Meeting twice a month, the first and third Tuesdays, 7:30-9 p.m., Bi Rap is a discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly and questioning women. This is one of the oldest ongoing bi women's groups in the country. Though BBWN (Boston Bisexual Women's Network) does not officially run the Bi Rap group, many of its members over the years have worked to keep Bi Rap a safe and vital space to find and explore the Boston bi women's community.

Each week there is a topic that focuses a large part of the meeting, but there is also time to ask questions and bring up issues that are of personal concern. The group meets at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

Visit BBWN online at:  
**[biresource.org/bbwn](http://biresource.org/bbwn)**  
for a calendar listing of  
local bisexual events.

### Bonanza from page 1

If she asks what it means that you love women AND men, you just tell her: "I'm more queer than you are."

Tired of distrustful lesbians? Come to Boston, the Bisexual Bonanza!

Boston has one of the biggest bi communities of any city. Why, there must be one or two dozen bisexuals in the greater Boston area (oops, maybe 5 dozen if you count the men). There are still plenty of lesbians for you to try to date also.

Boston is the home of the Bisexual Resource Center (BRC). No, the BRC does not have open office hours. No, the phone is not ever answered by a live person. But yes, some groups like the "Coming Out as Bisexual" group meet at the BRC (see calendar for details). It makes me feel proud, just knowing its there!

And Boston has the sweetest, nicest, most supportive bisexual community to be found anywhere. (No sarcasm here!)

Why stop after exploring every nook and cranny of the gay community? Boston has plenty to offer in the way of other eclectic communities, be it vegetarian political activism, contra dancing, bird watching, or computer user groups. Take it from me, I'm a software engineer.

Boston: eclectic, diverse, open-minded, over-educated home of the Bisexual Bonanza! ▼

*(Lucy Lizard facilitates the Bi Women's Rap Group at the Cambridge Women's Center: see calendar on pages 11-12 for details. She's not nearly this sarcastic when she's facilitating.)*

## Bi Boston

### Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting

On the second Wednesday of each month the board of the Bisexual Resource Center meets to discuss and plan various events, fundraising, and political concerns of the local and national bi community. All bi community members are welcome to attend and new board members are needed for 2004. The 6:30-8:30 p.m. meeting is on the 4th floor of the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. in Back Bay. Call 617-424-9595.

### NGLTF Report on LGBT Youth

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) Policy Institute has released their report entitled, "Education Policy: Issues Affecting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth."

Among the findings are that eight states and the District of Columbia have passed laws banning discrimination or harassment on the basis of sexual orientation. Three states and the District of Columbia ban discrimination against students on the basis of gender identity. At least five other states have adopted anti-harassment or nondiscrimination regulations covering sexual orientation. Nonetheless, anti-LGBT bias and violence remains widespread, according to a comprehensive review of the social science research. "This report will be a critical resource for those seeking a better understanding of LGBT youth and a commitment to ending the harassment and violence too many of these young people face on a daily basis," said Sean Cahill, Ph.D., Director of the Task Force Policy Institute and co-author of the study. Access the report in the Task Force online publications library at [www.nglftf.org/library](http://www.nglftf.org/library).



## Bisexual Resource Center House Party

Join the Bisexual Resource Center on Sunday, February 8th, 2-5 p.m., for its Third Annual Winter House Party. Location to be announced. All are invited. Hors d'oeuvres, wine, beer, and non-alcoholic beverages will be served. Come schmooze with a bunch of bi-friendly folks and make a donation to the Bisexual Resource Center, which provides support for bi people and bi issues around the world and especially in the Boston area. The Community Service Award will be presented to Andrew Rapp, Editor-in-Chief of *Bay Windows* for his great work on bi and trans inclusion in the paper. RSVP to [houseparty@biresource.org](mailto:houseparty@biresource.org); \$35 suggested contribution.

## Big Strong Bi Community

**W**ell, we have a really big strong community, one that has been integral to some very long lasting friendships for me in a sometimes transient city. Never having lived for a long time in another city (although I have traveled a lot) it is hard to compare. I hear that San Diego's BLGT community is less separated between men and women, than in some other cities.

I think BBWN is particular is very welcoming to newbies to Boston, not cliquey, for those just discovering the process. Boston has the rep as a notoriously cold city for dating and I wonder if people feel this within our community as well.

I have sometimes wanted to hang out in other communities during Pride just to see if it has a different feel. Certainly, 12 years ago in Northampton, I remember bis not being welcomed so we have come a long way.

## Bi Boston

### Support for Married But Not Straight Women

"Married But Not Straight" is a support group for women who are married to men and are also in or interested in being with women. We have a variety of women of all ages and from all different ethnic backgrounds in the group. We meet the second Tuesday of each month from 7:30-9:00 at the Cambridge Women's Center. We are a non-judgmental group that supports each other through whatever process we are in.

The group was formed about three years ago and has a regular attendance of 6-12 women and always welcomes new comers. We also are connected to the list serve MARBLES (MARried But LESbian) which is an online support for married women. Besides support we also post social events and go on outings together. If you are married and attracted to women you are NOT alone. We are a network of women here to support you. Questions about joining the support group or the list serve can be directed to Denise at [Dpp1029@rcn.com](mailto:Dpp1029@rcn.com).

By Fennel

My first impression when I moved to Boston 13 years ago was that I was excited BBWN existed. I was living in western Massachusetts, and had not found any groups there, and just felt like an outsider before I found BBWN. I think the BBWN brunches provide continuity in our lives, like a stillpoint where we can land and reconnect. ▽

## Bi Boston

### Biversity Brunches

A ritual for many tenured bis in the Boston community. Biversity Boston, the mixed gender social group, organizes a brunch in a local eatery twice a month. Each third Saturday and last Sunday of the month you can find an eclectic group of folks hanging out over brunch at Johnny D's in Somerville or dim sum in Chinatown or pizza at Veggie Planet in Harvard Square. Anyone who is interested just shows up and tries to spot the bi table. Very friendly environment and people often spontaneously plan to do something else after the brunch.

Biversity Boston has a wonderful monthly calendar of Boston bi community events as well as information on national and international conferences, etc. To receive an e-mail version of the Biversity calendar send a message to: [biversity-subscribe@biversity.org](mailto:biversity-subscribe@biversity.org).

## Bi Boston

### Bisexual People of Color Gathering

A monthly gathering for bi people of color. Whether you are Asian, Latino, Native American, African American, East Indian, Caribbean, biracial or of mixed heritage, all diverse ethnicities and gender identities are welcome. Activities vary each month, depending on what the participants want to do. Usually on the last Sunday of each month. For information call the BRC office at 617-424-9595 or contact John at 617-983-8788 or e-mail at [bi\\_naturist2@eudoramil.com](mailto:bi_naturist2@eudoramil.com) with 'BiPOC' in the subject line.



# The Night Life: Bi and Beyond

**B**i women in Boston don't have the nightly bar and club spots like a lot of other cities do. There hasn't been a bar exclusively for women within Boston for over ten years, so when you are looking for a spot to meet other women-loving women you have to check which night of the week it is or head to the suburbs. Here is a roundup of the current scene of where women are hanging out and meeting other women.

## THURSDAYS

*Dyke Night at the Midway Cafe, 3496 Washington St., Jamaica Plain.* This is Boston's longest running weekly women's dance party—it's almost unbelievable that the same place has served the queer women's community for five years! It's a \$5 cover (and over 25% of proceeds are donated to LGBT causes) and great DJs take turns keeping the dance floor packed until 2:00 a.m. Doors open at 9:30 p.m. 21+. Parking is usually no trouble, nearest T is Green Street on the orange line. Check out [dykenight.com](http://dykenight.com) for what's going on each week.

*Toast, 70 Union Square (Somerville Ave.), Somerville.* A new bar in Somerville is having a women's night but we haven't heard any word about it yet from folks. 617-571-9958. DJ Jim (Gay Jim from the KISS 108 morning show) spins every week from 9 p.m.-1 a.m. Cover charge is \$5. Not very T accessible but you could take a bus from Sullivan, Central or Harvard Squares.

## FRIDAYS

*Circuit Girl at "Night Games" club, Holiday Inn, 30 Washington St., Somerville.* This place was hopping earlier this year but then they took a long break to renovate the bar. We went dancing there recently and it took a while to get a decent-sized crowd on the dance floor. They probably need some advertising and some good word of mouth to catch on again. Large dance floor, second floor balcony for a great view of the dance floor, and lots of free parking. DJ Kris Kono, 21+, 10 p.m.-2 a.m.

## SATURDAYS

*Hollywood KTV, 41 Essex St., corner of Harrison.* Dancing 10 p.m.-2 a.m. every Saturday, but every third Saturday it's Glitter Switch: Drag/Karaoke, 21+ \$5, 7:30 p.m.-10 p.m. or \$10 includes dancing til 2 a.m. Come in drag, or you can wear your regular clothes. Karaoke or lip sync. Hosted by Drag King Heywood Wakefield with guest stars each show. Check out [www.truthserum.org](http://www.truthserum.org) for details. Chinatown T on the orange line.

## SUNDAYS

*Candyland, 403-5 Centre Street, Jamaica Plain.* A very comfortable lounge and club night for queers of all genders and friends. The entertainment is different on different weeks, but try out Drag Bingo if you really aren't that into playing bingo and you like being insulted by drag queens. Don't forget to bring dollar bills for the drag performances. 21+, shows begin at 8 p.m., dancing 10 p.m. Cover varies on different weeks. 617-524-3740. Check out [www.truthserum.org](http://www.truthserum.org) for more details.

## OUTSIDE BOSTON VENUES

### TUESDAY-SUNDAY

*Friends Landing, 85 Water St., Haverhill.* This is a large club with several bars and a couple of dance floors to choose from. Queer every night, it's a great place to dance, play pool or relax with friends. The crowd has an interesting mix of men and women, different ages. Especially nice in the summer to sit on the outside patio looking at the river. 21+, 6 p.m.-1 a.m., 978-374-9400, [www.friends-landing.com](http://www.friends-landing.com).

### WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY

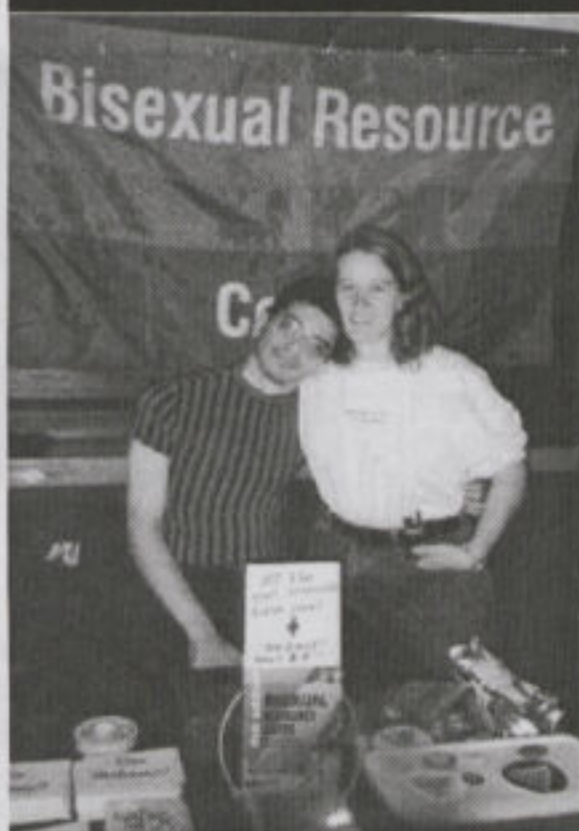
*Club Central, Route 1A, the Lynnway, Lynn.* New club in Lynn. We haven't been there yet to check out but those on the north shore may want to drop by and give us a review. Sunday's T-dance

Night continues on page 10

## Gender-free Country Dancing in JP!

Come and learn English Country Dance in a gender-role-free format. 7:30 p.m., on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, at the First Church in Jamaica Plain on Centre Street by the Monument. Beginners welcome, all dances are taught, no partner needed, \$7 donation requested. These group dances are fairly easy, mildly aerobic, and lots of fun! For more information, call Michael, 781-891-3296, or Rob, 781-271-0356.

## Bi Boston



## Celebrate Bisexuality Day

Did you know we have a day each year devoted to celebrating our bisexuality? Mark on your calendar September 23rd as Celebrate Bisexuality Day, or CBD for short. For the last four years, the Bisexual Resource Center has sponsored an event to commemorate the day in the Boston area. In the photo at left, Noel Rosenberg, current BRC President, and Sheeri Kritzer, current BRC Treasurer, promote bi visibility at the 2002 CBD held at ManRay in Cambridge.



## OUT Magazine Has Bi-sensitive Moment

In an article in *OUT* magazine, writer Ronni Radner describes what to do if a heterosexual person takes a shine to a gay or lesbian person and actually has a bi-sensitive moment. In her pointers on how to deal with an "unwanted suitor" she says, "Don't lie to make things 'easier.' Don't just say you're bisexual (unless, of course, you are) and you really lean more toward your own sex. If you're lying, it gives the admirer a false sense of hope. In any case, you're really selling out your honest, upstanding bisexual friends and perpetuating some outmoded negative stereotypes about their orientation." You've seen *BiWomen* take *OUT* to task for many a biphobic comment so it's refreshing to see such a bi-positive comment!

## Six Ways to Look at a "Drag Queen" By Marcia Diehl

"We all come into this world naked; all the rest is drag." - RuPaul

1

A drag queen awakens  
a little after noon,  
shocked at the feel of the night's stubble  
on her lipstick-streaked chin.

2

Your mother is sitting at her vanity  
(so aptly named),  
putting on creams and lotions,  
black lashes,  
pink shadings,  
transforming from Mom into Sweetheart.  
You lose her as she turns into this  
cool drag queen.

3

I was a teenage drag queen.  
Weren't you?  
Didn't you wear your father's white shirt  
as you painted the old kitchen porch?

4

I often think  
how Barbara Bush,  
wearing her L. L. Beans  
butch khaki pants  
was no Nancy Reagan.  
But which one was more  
of a drag queen?

5

The night of the prom  
I put on fishnet stockings  
and my father's  
thick blue  
Navy chaplain's jacket.  
You met me at the seedy town bar  
In your  
black paisley shirt.  
Drag king  
Or drag queen?  
It didn't matter, I was safe.  
Girls trade up  
in status and power  
when they dress like men,  
but boys get beat up  
and killed.

6

Last week,  
on Mother's Day,  
my mother and I watched  
her Sunday Morning show.  
Famous authors—all women—  
Cooed about Mommy's room,

Where they secretly tried on  
silks and heels,  
twirling in three-way-mirrors.  
I never was a girly girl  
with a secret closet life,  
but my old boyfriend was.  
And in a pinch,  
when I haven't done the laundry,  
I put on a pair  
of his abandoned  
purple satin panties.

## Bi Boston

### Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group

This group meets on the first Monday and second Wednesday of each month to discuss issues relevant to women in the poly community, especially those of interest to queer women. Meetings are 7:00-8:45 p.m. and range from social chatting to more in-depth discussions, depending on what people want to talk about each month. There is rarely a set topic beforehand. All self-identified women are welcome to meet with the group at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston for the Monday meetings (contact Rosa at [rosa@homeport.org](mailto:rosa@homeport.org)) and at the Diesel Cafe, 257 Elm Street in Somerville for the Wednesday meetings (contact Donna at [dalbino83@excite.com](mailto:dalbino83@excite.com)).

## Bi Boston

### Coming Out as Bisexual

An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. The group meets twice a month, on the first Wednesday and the third Thursday, 7:00-8:45 p.m. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.



# Top 7 Ways I Am Bisexual


By Marcia Deihl

Naming myself bisexual has made me:

1. Love dressing as butch or femme as I want (and back in the 70s it was a mortal sin!).
2. Know that love is rare and sacred no matter what "flesh suit" anyone is wearing.
3. Yet for me, know that the libido doesn't lie and I am (currently and probably always) a Kinsey 1, not 6, as proved in various wishful thinking encounters and a few damaged hearts along the way, mine included.
4. Sex is great when you don't fake anything and giggle a lot. Age is the key.
5. Free of gender stereotypes about strength, the great human need for relationship, and loud singing about the house (I want it all).
6. Just another schmo on the bus, trying to connect with all my communities as an out bi (when appropriate) in public and never hiding it in private.
7. Permission to be an "oddist"—to sing folk songs with grey hair and to not have a house and hubby and car and kid and be glad for the alternatives I DO have (most of the time).

BBWN was crucial to my identity when we formed it in '83-84, and I salute it with all my soul, even from afar. Instead of doing the "vertical" bi life (i.e., conferences, teaching speaking), I do a roots-oriented "horizontal" version, which fits my "Moonchild" sign. I love local communities that deepen with time and friendships. I am now involved at work (Harvard GLBT orgs), in the city (Cambridge citywide GLBT Town Meeting planning committee), in my church (OCBC) and in music events as an out bi, and I am living the dreams I had in 1983.

But I don't think I could be this free in a place with less support. So the point is: without my bi communities, local to international, I would be hiding, using various addictions, faking, watching TV and fantasizing. There but for fortune.

Immense thanks to the BBWN Newsletter! 

## Seattle Bisexual Women's Network Celebrates 20 Years

A big shout out to the bi women of Seattle, Washington, who just celebrated 20 years as a vibrant community and social space for bi women. It's such a great thing that our movement now has several organizations that have stood the test of time and continue to supply support, energy, and long-term friendships (and lovers!) to the women who turn to them. Congrats SBWN! A toast to twenty more years of bi activism and bi visibility!



**Bi Boston**

**BiWomen Mailing**

The Cambridge Women's Center is the place to be on the last Tuesday of every odd numbered month. That's when the BiWomen's newsletter gets stuffed and sealed to go out to its several hundred readers across the country. Join us at the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

## Centering Touch massage therapy & bodywork



RECEIVE 15% OFF  
a massage/bodywork session  
with mention of this ad

For more information or  
to make an appointment call

**Katrina Piehler, LCMT**

617.833.3035

1234 Broadway  
Somerville, MA



## BBWN Wants Your Used Books, CDs, VHS tapes, and DVDs!

Long-time member Gail Zacharias is helping BBWN with fundraising by listing used books, etc. on various online channels. 40% of the sale price will be donated to BBWN. If you have books to donate, please bring them to the BRC office, or contact Robyn (ochs@bi.org, 617-413-2717) to arrange for book transfer. The books must be in reasonably good shape—in particular, all pages must be present and readable (some highlighting and underlining is ok if it doesn't obscure the text), and the cover must be present and firmly attached to the pages (it's ok for the dust jacket of a hardcover to be missing). And the books mustn't be smelly (e.g. musty or smoky), since Gail will be storing them in her home!

## Massachusetts Court Demands Marital Equity for Same-Sex Couples

By Alan Hamilton

**O**n November 18, the Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) of Massachusetts (the state version of the U.S. Supreme Court) ruled that it is unconstitutional for Massachusetts to deny to same-sex couples the same rights and responsibilities as are available to mixed-sex couples through marriage.

That night, there was a celebratory gathering at the Old South Meeting House in Boston. And bisexuals and the Bisexual Resource Center were well represented. Thanks and congratulations to folks for their parts in the celebration.

The Bisexual Resource Center (BRC) helped to pay for the hall, which was publicly acknowledged from the microphone by Sue Hyde, NGLTF Field Organizer for New England, and organizer of the annual Creating Change conference for BGLT activists. Thanks to BRC board members Noel Rosenberg, Sheeri Kritzer, and Pepper Greene.

Marcia Deihl, one of the early organizers of Boston's bisexual community, led songs that brought out rousing choruses from the gathering.

Linda Blair, a former BRC President, was a speaker, and articulated clearly why this issue is important to bisexuals. "Now, it's not cupid

who decides whether a bisexual will get to marry her/his beloved. The decision belongs to the people involved, just as it should be."

Pete Chvany, current chair of the BRC Development Committee, and Buzz Harris, former member of the BRC Board, were both ushers and collection takers. The final total of donations collected at the celebration was over \$2,600—far more than the cost of the hall. As Pete said, "Put it in the war chest. We're going to need it to fight off challenges to this ruling." ▽

## Bi Boston

### Mixed Gender Poly Support Group

Meeting on the last Monday of the month, this group is intended as a supportive environment to talk about poly-related issues in your life, to ask questions, or just to hear what other people have to say. Meets 6:30-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston.

### Night Life from page 7

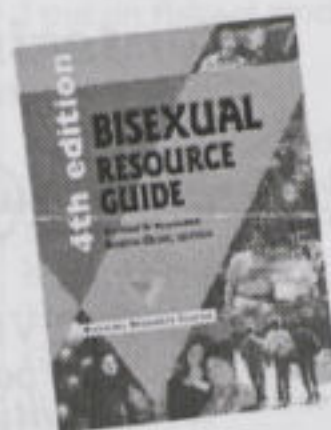
from 4 p.m.-8 p.m. \$5 cover begins after 10 p.m. Contact: Melanie melanielampros@comcast.net.

### DAILY

Fran's Place, 776 Washington St., Lynn.

If you miss the old "dyke dive bars" stop into Fran's. It's friendly and low key and the dance floor can fill up on busy nights. Pool tables and video games. 4 p.m.-2 a.m., 781-598-5618, [www.fransplace.net](http://www.fransplace.net).

Randolph Country Club, 44 Mazeo Dr., Randolph. A nightly queer place outside the city. There are a couple of dance floors, pool tables, a pool and patio in the summer time, and a very friendly, relaxed crowd of men and women who seem to coexist quite well. Try the Sunday karaoke to see the divas come out. \$7 cover for a monthly membership. Also, the first Friday of each month starting in January will be a smoke free dance for women. 781-961-2414, [www.geocities.com/fridaynightdanceparty](http://www.geocities.com/fridaynightdanceparty). ▽



Do you  
have your  
*Bisexual  
Resource  
Guide yet?*

To order, send check or money order for \$8, or get 2 for \$15 (payable to BRC), with your name and address, to:  
BRC, Dept. BBWN, P.O. Box 1026,  
Boston, MA 02117.

Or check out the BRC Web page at [www.biresource.org](http://www.biresource.org) to buy the Guide and other great bi products.



## CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

Sheeri's place, 39 Pearl St., Watertown. Contact Sheeri at awfief@cs.brandeis.edu or 857-205-9786.

### January 5 ♦ Monday

**Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group**, 7-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. See December 1st.

### January 6 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Intergenerational relationships (younger/older)." See December 1st.

### January 7 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual**, 7-9 p.m. See December 3rd.

### January 9 ♦ Friday

**Biversity Community Dinner**, 7 p.m. Ethiopian food will be shared at Addis Red Sea, 544 Tremont Street in Boston's South End. Near the Boston Center for the Arts. We used to go here for brunch, dinner will be even more fun. Bring a friend. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line. Contact Jay at js@aq.org for any questions.

### January 9 - 11 ♦ Friday - Sunday

**Fetish Fair Fleamarket**. New England Leather Alliance presents its semiannual Fetish Fair Fleamarket in the Boston Park Plaza hotel. 18+. See [www.nla-newengland.org/fff.html](http://www.nla-newengland.org/fff.html) for more info.

### January 11 ♦ Sunday

**BBWN Brunch** at Denise's in Natick, Noon - 3 p.m. Please bring a potluck dish or drinks to share. "Pride Products" will be on display. Contact Denise at dgarrow@rcn.com or 508-315-3176 for directions.

### January 13 ♦ Tuesday

**Married But Not Straight Women's Discussion Group**, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. See December 9th.

### January 14 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting**, 7-9 p.m. All bi community members welcome. Help the new board get off to a good start.

**Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group**, 7-8:45 p.m. at the Diesel Cafe. See December 10th.

### January 15 ♦ Thursday

**Coming Out as Bisexual**, 7-9 p.m. See December 3rd.

### January 16 ♦ Friday

**BiWomen Submissions Deadline**. This issue's theme is "What Are You Reading?" See page 2 for more ideas. Send submissions to: *BiWomen*,

P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA, 02140 or e-mail to [nellythrustmor@aol.com](mailto:nellythrustmor@aol.com).

### January 17 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Brunch**, 11:30 a.m. Why argue with success? Johnny D's on Holland Street in Davis Square in Somerville always draws the biggest bi brunch crowd. The Davis stop on the Red Line is just across the street.

### January 20 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center**, 7:30-9:00 p.m. The topic is: "Dreams and Fantasies" See December 2nd.

### January 25 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch**, 1:00 p.m. For years we've been looking for an suitable brunch place in downtown Jamaica Plain. Now we think we have one. Brunch will be at Costello's Jam Kitchen at 723 Centre Street in JP. Take the 39 bus from Back Bay or Forest Hills.

### January 26 ♦ Monday

**Mixed Gender Poly Support Group**, 6:30-8:45 p.m. This group is intended as a supportive environment to talk about poly-related issues in your life, to ask questions, or just to hear what other people have to say. At Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland Street, Boston.

### January 27 ♦ Tuesday

**BiWomen mailing**, 7 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807. Can you say label, stuff, and seal? Help BBWN get the newsletter out to women around the country. Socialize during and after, when we'll head to Central Square for a cuppa.

**Biversity Boston** is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

## Ongoing Events

### Wednesdays:

**Gendertalk**, 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

### Women's Club Nights

**Saturdays**: Dancing at Hollywood KTV, 41 Essex Street, Chinatown T, Boston. 10 p.m.-2 a.m. \$10 cover.

**Sundays**: Queer night, 9 p.m.-1a.m., the Milky Way, 403 Centre St, Jamaica Plain. DJ and dance floor.

**Thursdays**: Dyke Night at the Midway Cafe, 3496 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain. Pool table 8-10, DJ with dancing 10-2.



## SUBSCRIPTION RATE

for *BiWomen*  
(sliding scale)

- \_\_\_ \$0-\$20 (pay what you can)
- \_\_\_ \$20-\$30 (suggested)
- \_\_\_ \$30-\$100 Extra Special Donor
- \_\_\_ Renewal
- \_\_\_ New Subscriber

**BiWomen wants you!!!**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140



## The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

### Ongoing Events

#### 1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

**Bi Women's Rap.** 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

#### 2nd Tuesdays:

**Married Bi Women's Discussion Group.** 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

#### First Wednesdays, Third Thursdays:

**NEW DAY: Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-9 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

# CALENDAR

#### December 1 ♦ Monday

**Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group.** 7-8:45 p.m. at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland St., Boston. Meetings range from social chatting to more in-depth discussions. Contact Rosa@homeport.org.

#### December 2 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center.** 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Topic: "Flirting: how do you do it? Do you flirt differently with women than you do with men? Is one easier to do/receive/participate in than the other?" Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

#### December 3 ♦ Wednesday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

#### December 7 ♦ Sunday

**Bisexual Resource Center Annual Report Mailing.** 1-4 p.m. Come help the BRC with their mailing at the Davis Square Wainwright Bank Community Room, 250 Elm Street. There will be food of your choosing after the mailing and drinks during the mailing. Show your bi spirit and hang out with great folks.

#### December 9 ♦ Tuesday

**Married But Not Straight Women's Discussion Group.** 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. A support group for bi and lesbian women who are married or in long-term relationships. Contact Denise at dpp1029@aol.com for information. Meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Call 617-354-8807 for directions.

#### December 10 ♦ Wednesday

**Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting.** 6:30-8:30 p.m. This is the meeting where we review the past year's accomplishments, look ahead to the next, and elect new board members and officers. New board members are vital to the organization, so please consider serving. All bi community members are welcome and encouraged to attend. The meeting is at the Living Center at 29 Stanhope Street in Back Bay.

**Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group.** 7-8:45 p.m. at the Diesel Cafe, 257 Elm Street in Somerville. Contact dalbino83@excite.com.

#### December 16 ♦ Tuesday

**Bi Rap at the Women's Center.** 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Holiday Open Rap." See December 2nd.

#### December 18 ♦ Thursday

**Coming Out as Bisexual.** 7-9 p.m. See December 3rd.

#### December 20 ♦ Saturday

**Biversity Brunch.** 11:30 a.m. Brunch will be at Thornton's, 100 Peterborough Street in Boston's Fenway area. Nearest T stop is Fenway on the D branch of the Green Line.

#### December 22 ♦ Monday

**Mixed Gender Poly Support Group.** 6:30-8:45 p.m. This group is intended as a supportive environment to talk about poly-related issues in your life, to ask questions, or just to hear what other people have to say. At Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland Street, Boston.

#### December 28 ♦ Sunday

**Biversity Brunch.** 1 p.m. Let's try another new place! Today's brunch will be at Bertucci's at 21 Brattle Street in Harvard Square. Nearest T stop is Harvard on the Red Line.

#### December 31 ♦ Wednesday

**Biversity Boston's FIRST NIGHT.** 7 p.m. We will begin the New Year's Eve celebration with vegetarian food at Buddha's Delight in Boston's Chinatown. From there, the group will decide what First Night festivities to partake in. Buddha's Delight is downstairs on Beach Street between Harrison and Washington. Nearest T stop is Chinatown on the Orange Line.

#### January 4 ♦ Sunday

**BRC House Party Mailing.** 1-4 p.m. Be the first to get your house party invitation by coming to the house party mailing! The mailing will be at

**Judy Glick, M.Ed., LMHC**  
licensed psychotherapist for lesbians,  
gays, and bisexuals

- Enhancing self-esteem
- Recovery from incest/abuse
- Coming out

- Relationship and family issues
- Depression and anxiety
- Transitions and career change

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